

The Dixons – Prolog

Jerry Dixon checked the rearview mirror again, and then the side mirrors. He could see no evidence they were still being followed. He wasn't alone in the Suburban, his wife June was in the passenger seat beside him and their boys, David 14 and Donald 13, were in the back seat. The trailer they pulled was essentially preloaded and they'd managed to bug out 15 minutes after he'd arrived home in response to the NWS SAME radio announcement.

The food from the refrigerator had been June's responsibility. It was loaded into two coolers with frozen 1 gallon water bottles. The bottles could supply emergency water when they melted, if necessary. Dave had the responsibility of moving the firearms stored in the gun case to the Suburban and the limited ammunition not already in the trailer. Don had to grab the duffle bags of clothing and personal items. They were almost ready when Jerry arrived.

Jerry worked about 15 minutes from home on a normal day. When the announcement came, he simply walked off the job, got into his commute vehicle, a Subaru, and headed home. The first 10 minutes saw only normal daytime traffic, while the next 10 minutes were spent avoiding panicked drivers. Many were ignoring stop signs and red lights, bulling their way to wherever they were going.

The announcement hadn't indicated the country was under attack by a foreign power, only that it was likely within the next 24 hours and that citizens should make preparations in the event it occurred. It hadn't indicated which foreign power, and his money was on China. It could just as easily be Russia, their program to ramp up their Borei submarine fleet had 10 subs commissioned and 2 undergoing factory sea trials. They had also been modernizing their land missile component.

On the other hand, China had increased its armed forces from 2.3 million to 2.75 million and had a submarine fleet that exceeded Russia's in number of boats. They had more attack submarines than Russia and fewer SSBNs. Their J-20 fighter program had cranked out 4 fighters or more per month for the past 5 years. No one had a good count on the late generation fighter aircraft. They weren't short on J-10s. China had also doubled the number of guided missile destroyers and added a second aircraft carrier.

The Ford, CVN 78, had replaced Enterprise, Nimitz was retired and the Kennedy, CVN 79, had just finished sea trials. A rush had been placed on the construction of CVN-80. It wasn't even named yet but it wouldn't be named after a President, and Enterprise and Lexington were under consideration. The two carriers were equipped with F-35C Lightning II and F/A-18E/F fighters, the EA-18G Growler, E-2D Advanced Hawkeye, C-2A Greyhound, MH-60R/S Seahawk and UAVs.

“LOOK OUT!”

“They must have gotten off I-44 and sped up on a side road to try and out run us. They’re ahead of us coming up the on ramp.” Those 2 guys in the pickup had been trying to get us to pullover for several miles.

“Darn, I thought we’d lost them. June, can you put a couple over their bow?”

“WHAT?”

“Aim at the engine compartment. I’ll veer left.”

She slipped the Glock G-21SF from her purse with a spare magazine and started punching holes. They screeched to a halt and I got around them.

“Boy’s keep an eye out. If they follow, try to dissuade them.”

The Dixons – Chapter 1

All 4 of us had a G-21SF and a G-30SF. Because the Glocks came with 2 magazines, we bought 3 additional regular G-30 magazines to carry in the dual ankle magazine carriers, but all the other extra magazines we purchased were for the G-21SF. Our knives and ETs were also made by Glock. Our shotguns were Remington model 11-87Ps with the Wilson ghost ring sights and 870 combos.

Let me just get the rifles out of the way. We started out with the Ruger SR-556, buying 4 with a bulk purchase of Magpul magazines and surplus M855 ammo, 6 cases of 840-rounds each per rifle. As good as the 5.56×45mm cartridge is it's not a powerful long range sniper cartridge.

We settled on a parkerized Springfield Armory M1A Super Match action that McMillan bedded into a McMillan Adjustable M3A ladder elevator cheek piece plain black stock. The 10-round magazine it comes with is too large for hunting and too small for practical use. I bought a FMCO CSV-M10 12 mag vest with the pouches adapted for the 25-round magazines and 26 CMI 25-round magazines. That gave me 13 to use and 13 for backup. We each had a FMCO CSV-M10 12 mag vest for the Ruger magazines.

The scope was a Leupold Mark 4 ER/T 6.5-20×50mm (30mm tube) M5 Front Focal riflescope and I used A.R.M.S. throw lever rings to attach it to a Sadlak mount. We live in a class III state and after a wait, the dealer installed the Surefire suppressor. McMillan had installed the Harris bipod. The ammo was M118LR. That got us to 1,000 meters. We had one other rifle, a McMillan Tac-338 with the supplied Leupold Mark 4 8.5-25×50mm M1 Mil Dot scope, Elite Iron suppressor, maintenance kits and 6 additional magazines for a total of 10. The ammo was 300gr Lapua Magnum and got us to 2,000 meters.

“They’re coming again. Shotgun or pistol?”

“Dave, you use the Remington and Don, you use your Glock. Try to punch through the windshield.”

“Why are they following us?”

“My best guess would be to get our trailer.”

“Can’t you go faster?”

“That trailer is a heavy load and we’re on an incline. We’re doing 65 as it is which isn’t too bad in the circumstances. We’re almost to the top and maybe I can pick up a little more speed then.”

“Got him!”

I looked in the side mirror and couldn't see the pickup.

"I can't see him, what's happening?"

"I must have gotten the driver. The pickup veered sharply to the right and flipped 3 or 4 times. It was flipping so fast I couldn't count."

"Thanks Dave."

"How much longer to the cabin?"

"About 45 minutes."

"Can you stop at that service station and top off the tanks while I use the lady's room?"

"No problem. Boy's I'll give you some cash and you can get 2 12 packs of Coke Classic, some sandwiches and chips. I didn't get lunch and my stomach is starting to growl."

"You sure you want to spend cash?"

"I can earn more assuming nothing happens. If something happens I have serious doubts it will be worth much."

"I thought you were nuts when you bought all of those gold coins when your father and mother were killed in that accident. It was about \$1,000 an ounce plus minting and markup. What was the spot price on Kitco last night?"

"It was \$2,535.65 and silver was \$47.80." We paid off the house first and all the credit card balances. That funded the 5 acres and the cabin along with the shelter, LTS food and extra equipment. Then, when their house sold, we bought the firearms, ammo and more gold coins at \$1,100 an ounce plus.

"You should have bought some junk silver."

"I bought \$1,000 face in dimes and quarters. Didn't I tell you?"

"You may have, I don't remember. What's it worth now?"

"The dimes are worth \$170.89 per roll and the quarters \$341.78 per roll. Individually the dimes are \$3.42 and the quarters \$8.55 each. That could change quickly if something happens."

My father was a big believer in life insurance and had large policies on both mother and him, half a million each. Life insurance isn't subject to estate tax or income tax because it's purchased with taxed earnings. Purchased when they were younger, the policies in-

creased in value. My sister and I split about \$1.4 million plus another \$300 thousand when the house sold.

Our accountant said to buy a piece of property to avoid taxes on the \$150,000. We had already bought the 5 acres and built the shelter, cabin and out buildings. There wasn't enough left to pay taxes if it had been taxable. Who was to say which money paid for which expense? The shelter had been built next to the basement. Both were 10' below ground level. Well, because 120" of earth cover alone provides a protection factor of over 8 billion and I wanted the basement as protected as the shelter.

The Swiss blast door was at the bottom of the basement stairs which were on the long side of the back of the cabin. An American Safe Rooms blast door separated the basement and shelter and an American Safe Rooms blast hatch protected the emergency egress.

The stairwell inner wall was thicker than the basement wall since it was a triple wall of two layers of filled block with 72" of soil in between. It was our next to weakest point with protection factor of 100 million. The Swiss blast door had to be mounted in a 10" concrete wall and later filled with concrete. That was backed by another set of block walls with another 72" of soil in between. The cabin, basement and shelter were all the same size, 48'x40' or 1,920ft². We put in a pair of Safe Cells to get a full air exchange every 2 hours and 24 minutes. The real weak point was the Swiss blast door because I didn't build an airlock.

Both the basement and shelter had 9' ceilings, painted in Navajo white. The cabin had 3 bedrooms and 2½ baths. It has wood paneling throughout, excluding the kitchen and baths. The boys shared a Jack and Jill full bath with tub and separate shower and the master bedroom had an ensuite full bath with shower and oval tub. We don't expect company but the ½ bath was handy and took little space. The space normally taken by a dining room was the kitchen party with an upright freezer, 21ft³, and extensive shelving storing a one year supply of grocery store food for 4. A chest freezer, 25ft³, was placed in both the shelter and basement. The shelter had a storeroom as opposed to pantry and the basement was all storage.

The house faced north and the PV panels were mounted on the back of the roof. We had an aiming system controller by our inverter. The wind turbine was at one back corner of the cabin and the antenna tower on the other back corner. We had verticals and beams, about one of everything. The amateur gear was Yaesu and the business units Motorola. The CBs were Cobra SSB mobiles with 40 channel portables. The CB base station was a TR-696F-SSB with a Galaxy DX-2547 AM/SSB CB Base Station as a backup.

The basement floor and shelter floor were about 20' below grade to allow for the overhead and 120" of soil. Everything that was going into the shelter and basement was placed there before the overhead went on. We had way more than \$150 thousand tied up in the cabin, etc. before we were done.

The generator room was built off the pedestrian arch that led to the blast hatch and it mostly climbed a grade with an ell halfway out. The generator room was larger than it needed to be. There were 3 55-gallon drums, 1 empty and 2 full of 15w-40 Castrol oil. And dozens of air, fuel and oil filters.

Beneath the shelter floor was a small septic tank with sewage pump that emptied the tank into our larger septic system. The well water was plumbed directly to a pressure tank. While the shelter wasn't a duplicate of the cabin, the floor arrangement was similar.

One of the reasons everything had cost so much was the pair of Isuzu 21kw diesel generators and the new Containment Solutions 40,000-gallon double wall fiberglass diesel tank. Yep, I read everything TOM and Jerry published. Between them I had more ideas than we had money. The diesel tank was filled with 39,580-gallons of B-100 with 20-gallons of PRI-D and an anti-gel (400-gallons of kerosene). We had a 1,000-gallon farm tank of taxed diesel and a 300-gallon farm tank of gasoline plus a 400-gallon tank of kerosene.

But we aren't there yet. June is in the ladies room, the boys are trying hard to blow \$40 on food and drinks and I'm filling the twin 42-gallon aftermarket tanks of the Suburban. I caught a deal on the Suburban just when I was in the market. It was 3 years old and had a blown engine and damaged tranny. We got it dirt cheap because the guy was looking at a new engine and transmission.

I replaced the gas engine with a Cummins 6BT, per Jerry, and manual transmission and transfer case according to TOM. All that other junk was purely Jerry. I didn't even know at first what pioneer tools were. I'd have put on an electric winch had it been up to me. I listened to my elders!

I suppose I should apologize to TOM over the Tac-338. But it shoots as far as or further than the Tac-50 and costs less. I bought .338 Lapua Magnum Federal Gold Medal 300gr Sierra MatchKing BTHP for ~\$100 per box of 20 rounds. By going with the Leupold scope, etc. we bought a lot of the Federal Match ammo with what we saved, 1,000-rounds. Plus, I make good money and kept buying it 100 rounds at a time. But, there's more to that rifle than meets the eye.

June got a Nightforce NXS 12-42x56mm scope on sale, she said. Caught a good deal on a MUNS, you know the AN/PVS-27, she said. Anyone need a Leupold Mark 4 ER/T 6.5-20x50mm (30mm tube) M5 Front Focal riflescope? I switched the scope off the Tac-338 to the M21 and it's available. Maybe we should hang onto that. What else do you call a Super Match with an adjustable stock besides an M21, Springfield Armory does?

We're only about 30-35 minutes out now that we're back on the road. Dave and Don managed to spend all \$40 too. They bought 4 12 packs of Coke, 4 bags of Lays classic

chips and 4 foot long subs. Anything we can't eat, they will. Highway Patrol just went screaming by with lights and siren... probably an accident back down the road.

"We're here. The boys and I'll get unloaded and move everything to the empty shelves in the basement, bags into rooms and so forth. June, will you make some coffee and get something around for supper from the coolers, probably fix the 2 chickens we planned on for supper?"

Hey, they're teenagers and have appetites to match their ages. Most of the time we do El Pollo Loco style chicken, e. g., cut out the back bone and cook the whole chicken on the gas grill. The tank here is 5,000-gallons and the only way to get it was to buy the 5,500-gallon tank, new. We only use it for the grill, stove and hot water heater. We only have one 50-gallon hot water heater, in the basement, and the pipes are wrapped in insulation.

We don't have El Pollo Loco in the St. Louis area (Ballwin). We had it once a few years back in Chicago. I saw how it was grilled and adopted the style, sans marinating the chicken. It's pretty good plain. Use low heat and close the top. We have the permanently installed propane grill and a smaller portable propane grill. There's a wet leg on the tank so we keep 5 20# bottles, 4 filled and the 1 in use. The chicken was off the grill and I was cutting it up, as in hacking it to death. June had a deli carton of coleslaw and one of potato salad so that pretty much defined dinner.

"Boys, wash up, supper is ready."

Dave headed to the ½-bath and Don to the Jack and Jill. They no more than sat down at the table when the NWS SAME radio sounded off. We were receiving an EAN. That's never been used before, in any form. The message was short and not very sweet, the US was under missile attack by unstated parties. Good point Mr. President, did it really matter who was attacking?

"Boys, help your mother empty the refrigerator into the refrigerator in the shelter. I'll cut off the feeds from the PV panels and wind turbine. I think we're about to find out how well those Isuzu Diesels work."

It was relatively easy to shut down the power feeds, yank 2 cutoff switches. That would leave us on the single bank of submarine batteries in the basement. When they began to drain, a generator would kick in at a certain point and the ATS would cut off the batteries as soon as the generator was producing power. We had an electrical engineer design and test the rather comprehensive system. That's why we had a pair of Isuzu 21kw generators, in case the primary didn't start the secondary would kick in. We sure didn't need 200 amps.

The battery bank consisted of 24 2.2v batteries each with a capacity of 7,000 amps, ergo 52.8vdc (48vdc) and 168,000 amps. It would be a while before we switched to gen-

erator power. With a 48 volt system, (24 cells), $4 \times 45 \text{ days} = 180 \text{ days} = 6 \text{ months}$. When current is drawn from batteries at 200 amps or less, instead of 7000 amps, as above, kilowatt hour ratings are increased 20 to 30%.

“We’re locked in. Don, you connect the CD V-717. Dave, dig out the AMP-200 and get it connected. I think whoever it is will hit Whiteman and likely Kansas City and St. Louis.”

“Our home!”

“We may be okay, June. It really depends on where the warheads hit the St. Louis area. We’re about 18 miles line of sight and 24 road miles from downtown. I’d think that whoever is behind this would go for the bridges. What radiation we’d get will be from KC and Whiteman, assuming they don’t hit the state capitals.”

“Dad, does that mean we’ll end up being Ozark farmers?”

“We have 5 acres Dave. Gardening maybe, farming is very unlikely.”

“How big is 5 acres?”

“It’s 30 rods on the long side and $26\frac{2}{3}$ rods on the short side. A rod is $16\frac{1}{2}'$. The easiest way to visualize it is that it’s everything within our fence line.”

“Why does the road come so close to the fence line?”

“Because they built the fence many years after the road was established. They didn’t bother to see if there was any minimum standoff from the road for the fence and they wanted almost all 5 acres fenced.”

“Why?”

“It might come a time where possession is 9 points of the law.”

[Presumably derives from legal principle where the satisfaction of 10 (or at times 12) points legitimated ownership; hence “nine points of the law” (sometimes “eleven points of the law”) constituted close to full ownership. Derived from the early English property system, where the right to possession of property was endorsed by the king in the form of a writ. There were nine traditional writs granted by the King, and each of these nine writs represented the nine basic rights of property possession. These nine writs evolved into the nine original laws defining property ownership, hence the expression “possession is nine points of the law.”]

The Dixons – Chapter 2

If you look at a Missouri map in and around Marshfield and follow 38 to Farmland Road to Old Seymour Road which becomes Wild Cherry Lane, you're getting close. We're hunkered down at the moment and won't wave. The Suburban and trailer are locked up in the 3 stall garage along with our tools.

June and I previously went around the area to meet our neighbors and to offer to cut up any deadfalls or standing dead trees. It was the two birds, one stone thing. The cabin had a large, stone faced, fireplace that would actually keep it warm if the doors weren't left open.

Tucked tight and safe about 20' below ground level, we had no sense of any warhead strikes. We'd discussed and planned on installing CCTV cameras but just never got around to it. There was some discussion about whether they, or the PV panels, would survive the HEMP if the attacker went that way. It was much less expensive to go with a wind turbine as opposed to a second set of PV panels.

Under the theme of bigger isn't always better, I reviewed what the various nuclear powers had for warheads and bombs. While China had some big warheads, the common choice was under 1mt and when MIRV'd they generally were in the 200kt range. That made sense when I thought about it; although a 200kt warhead wasn't twice as powerful as a 100kt warhead.

The current largest operational warhead was Chinese and was a 5mt single warhead. Russia had large warheads on some of their SS-18 Satans, 18-25mt. The SS-18 went through a series of changes under the USSR and Russia, and some of the warheads were the single large weapon while others in the series were MIRV's. Some of the last MIRV'd weapons had 10 warheads in the 750kt – 1mt range, plus decoys.

The US followed a different path and a MIRV'd Minuteman III had, at most, 3 warheads. The best missile in our fleet, the Peacekeeper, had 10 warheads. But there's the SSBN fleet of 14 boomers. One has to speak in theoretical terms about those because of the various treaties and secrecy. The Ohio class has 24 vertical launch tubes (VLT), each with a D-5 missile. Each D-5 missile had a theoretical capacity of 12 warheads, but it was limited by START I and further limited by SORT.

Most of the PAW authors envision a first strike against the US, typically by Russia, China, or both. Most go on to launch all 450 Minuteman III missiles due to their vulnerability. The fleet of Ohio class SSBNs is generally presumed to be out of port due to some sort of warning. Although the US retaliates with the Minuteman fleet, the 14x24 D-5 missiles are viewed as being held in reserve for a possible second strike against someone.

If the US cheated and had the original 8 warheads on each of the 336 missiles, there would be 2,688 100kt warheads available to deploy. The CEP on a D-5 warhead is

measured in feet. But, what if we didn't play by the rules and deployed 12 warheads per missile? Now we're talking about $336 \times 12 = 4,032$ 100kt warheads. And, if the Minuteman III missiles were all MIRV'd in contradiction to the treaties, one could add another $450 \times 3 = 1,350$ warheads for a total of $4,032 + 1,350 = 5,382$. But, we play by the rules, right? That's 538.2mt, minimum.

"Jerry, are we retaliating?"

"Funny you should ask, June. I was just calculating what would happen if the US cheated on all those treaties. We would have, theoretically mind you, 5,382 missile warheads in play. I assume that the Minuteman III missiles would all be launched since they're fixed targets. TOM and Jerry plus some of the others suggest the D-5s would be held in reserve."

"What for?"

"I really have no idea, World War Four? The thing about the submarines is that they only carry 90 days' worth of stores. Even if some of those underway replenishment ships were at sea, I'm not certain how long they could stay at sea before the crew's went nuts."

"Talk about going nuts, are we going to be ok?"

"Don, what's the radiation reading?"

"Very low Dad; it's within the error rate for the meter. It's above background but not by much."

"Unless the radiation rises June, we'll be out of here in a few days."

"It seems like such a waste with the expense and all; building such an over rated shelter and basement."

"You wouldn't be saying that if they hit Springfield."

Late the next day, after trying to entertain ourselves since late the evening before, June asked, "What does everyone want for supper?"

"Do you have anything in mind?"

"I have some boneless chops I could pound out and make breaded pork tenderloin sandwiches with french fries."

"That sounds good and both boys love that meal. Do we have buns?"

“The 8 pack of the Texas sized hamburger buns that I brought with us. When we’re out of bread I’ll use some of the dough for hamburger and hot dog buns.”

“Great. Would you have enough for a loaf of french bread?”

“I can double the batch and make both styles of buns, french bread and cinnamon rolls if you like.”

“I’d like that very much. If you need, I can help knead the bread dough down so all you have to do is knead one pan and form the loaves, buns and baguettes.”

“Then I should plan on chili?”

“If you wouldn’t mind. Will a double batch of bread keep?”

“We’ll bag it and refrigerate it. We can warm some up when we decide on the main course for the meal. We have cooked grain cereals like cream of wheat and oatmeal for breakfast and canned meats and soup for lunch. Would you like me to prepare a weekly menu ahead of time for everyone to review?”

“That’s a very good idea. You have the running food inventory on the laptop and keep the menu varied and allow us to uniformly use the STS and LTS foods.”

“We’re going to run out of STS foods long before we run out of LTS foods and you know it Jerry.”

“That can’t be helped until we can plant a garden. The pile of composted manure is large enough to last for years so with enough heat and sunlight we should do well with a garden.”

“What if we have a so-called nuclear winter?”

“We have enough dimension lumber and heavy rolled clear plastic to build a greenhouse.”

“Why didn’t we just buy one?”

“I checked it out and they were out of our price range. However I did buy fluorescent fixtures and a mixture of warm and cool white bulbs.”

“Get those on sale?”

“Naturally; just like you got the Nightforce scope and MUNS on sale.”

“Actually the scope was on sale. I nearly choked when I saw the price of that MUNS. And then, I figured what the heck, the further we can keep outlaws away from us, the better. What didn’t we get?”

“We could have used more .338 Lapua. Darned ammo is \$5 a round. By the way, we still haven’t received any significant radiation. I assumed we’d surely get some from Tulsa and Oklahoma City. KC, Jefferson City and St. Louis are too far north to be much of a problem.”

“Do you plan of scavenging like TOM recommends?”

“Not a lot. I wouldn’t mind additional diesel, gas and kerosene. I was thinking we might find a Products Research, Inc. distributor in Springfield due to the proximity of Table Rock Lake.”

“Check Branson too.”

“Ok, it’s not that much further.”

“Where did you get your .338 Lapua ammo?”

“Cheaper than Dirt.”

“Midway USA is in Columbia, you might try there.”

“Might be able to use up our cash if they’re open for business.”

“If they’re not?”

“The ammo will be much cheaper and we’ll get a trailer load. We might be able to pick up some soft point hunting rounds while we’re at it. The .308 Winchester can be substituted for the 7.62x51mm ammo too; the M1A will shoot both, according to Springfield Armory, Inc. If we’re not picky on brand or bullet weight, we can get all of the .338 Lapua we’ll ever need. The same applies to the .45acp and 5.56x45mm.”

“You built that one out building with a barn in mind. We might not be able to farm 5 acres but it would be enough to pasture a couple of beef and a couple of hogs, wouldn’t it?”

“Yes, I had it in mind and arranged for hay and grain. If our neighbors kept their part of the deal, the loft is filled with hay and grain and we have a milk cow and a feeder beef along with a sow and breeding services. We’ll have chicks for the hen house, too. You didn’t ask and I assume you had it figured out.”

“I pretty well guessed where you were going with it. What do we know about raising livestock?”

“Not a lot, but our neighbors are farmers and can be a wealth of information. I sure hope we don’t get much radiation because it might affect our ability to get the livestock I bought.”

“Dad, the radiation level is rising.”

“Where is the wind?”

“We have westerly’s.”

“That would be Tulsa or Oklahoma City. What is the wind speed?”

“About 8-10mph, varying.”

“Well Oklahoma City is about 290 miles but we’re east-northeast from there. Two ninety divided by 10 is 29 hours so time wise, it should be Oklahoma City. We’ll know better when the radiation peaks. Can you give me an exact wind direction?”

“Um, 60°”

“That would be on the money for time and distance from Oklahoma City. We should peak below 60R/hr.”

“How do you figure?”

“Dig out TOM’s spreadsheet and plug in 3,000 Rads and check the reading around 30 hours.”

“Hang on... Ok, it has readings at 27 hours and 33 hours but not 30 hours.”

“What’s the level at 27 hours?”

“Round numbers, 59R/hr.”

“And what about 33 hours?”

“Round numbers, 47R/hr.”

“It’s geometric, for every 7 hour interval, ergo 7 to the first, second, third power, the radiation level is 10% of the previous level.”

“Is that what this column N is all about?”

“Yes that’s the power to which 7 is raised. Which version of the spreadsheet do we have?”

“How do I tell?”

“TOM’s is plain; Jerry added colors and cell protection.”

“Jerry’s version.”

“I’ll dig around for TOM’s CD. He included his original on it without the cell protection. We’ll fool around with it and make it come out to around 30 hours. My gut feeling is that it will be around 53R/hr because 59 plus 47 divided by 2 is 53.”

“Then we’ll be out of here soon!”

“Not so fast, sport. On the same spreadsheet when does the last column go below 100?”

“Row 50.”

“The hours are shown in cell B50. How many hours?”

“This can’t be right, 6,352.45 hours or 265 days or 38 weeks or almost 9 months.”

“Do you want the good news or the bad news?”

“Can it get worse?”

“TOM recommends sheltering until the level in the last column if below 50.”

“That’s over a year!”

“By George, I think he’s got it!”

“Don’t be flip Jerry.”

“Sorry Don.”

I should have just had Don flip to page one of the spreadsheet where TOM’s explanations of what everything meant were written. In fact it was right at 13 months and would really depend on what the reading was at that time. Although meters were generally calibrated in counts per minute or Sieverts, you could still buy new meters calibrated Roentgens per hour and milli-Roentgens per hour and all kinds of ranges were available from 10,000R/hr to 50mR/hr, and lower. In addition to the AMP 200, we had an AMP 100, 0.005R/hr to 1,000 R/hr and an AMP 50, 10 μ R/hr to 4R/hr. The devices were linear for their full ranges. The AMP devices were Area Monitors and read the above ground

level radiation level. I suppose the CD V-717 was redundant and less accurate, but it was the first meter we bought and the most recently calibrated.

We had KIO_3 because it tasted better than KI, not that we'd probably need it. The other thing we had that had been a huge expense was the FM50 Gas Masks and accessories plus extra filters. Don't ask, but, I could have had a Tac-50, instead; but it had a single filter. We had level B suits, gloves, boots and tape, just in case of a biological or chemical attack, Think of it as close to total overkill. Total overkill would have been level A suit with SCBA.

We got all the value we could for the money we spent. The shelter and basements would have been the same had they been buried under 72" of soil instead of 120" of soil and the soil didn't cost us anything, just the extra excavation. The cabin was a prefab log cabin with 12" thick T&G logs and 4" of foam insulation under the paneling so the electrician had plenty of room to wire it up. That was covered with various types of 5/16" unfinished paneling stained differently for the various rooms. Cedar paneling was used in the closets. I didn't follow Jerry's suggestion about Skousen outer walls.

The electrical wiring was in flex and carried power to the duplexes. A second, larger, flex conduit carried the 25 pair telephone cable, Ethernet cat. 5E cable and the feed from the satellite dish. Yes, it cost more, but not that much more and installing it at the outset was far less expensive than retrofitting.

We blew most of the inheritance but had a fair portion in hard cash. And while our armory wasn't top of the line, I couldn't justify buying select fire weapons. I was banking on the 95% and not the 5%. Plus there was the scavenging angle to be exploited, when we were back above ground. Perhaps a class III dealer could be located in Springfield, Jefferson City, KC or the St. Louis area. HK416s and HK417s would add to our firepower. Because if it's not a gas piston, I don't want it!

I recall reading on Wiki that a 50-round, low profile drum magazine developed by HK for the HK21E machine gun can be fitted to the HK417 for use in support and sustained fire applications. Their Military and LE catalog didn't show the magazine. We shall see what we shall see. TOM and Jerry both said that. It's probably a quote...

Wait, I copied the page from Wiki about the HK21E machinegun. It says, "Simple conversion from belt to magazine feed is possible by installing an adapter in the feed block which enables the use of H&K's proprietary 20-round box magazine (from the G3 rifle) or a 50-round drum magazine." And on the HK417 page I copied, it says, "The early prototype HK417 used 20-round magazines from the H&K G3 rifle family, which did not feature a bolt hold-open device. Later prototypes, however, switched to a polymer magazine with bolt hold-open. The magazine resembles an enlarged version of the G36 series transparent magazine, except without the pins for holding more than one magazine together. In addition, a 50-round, low profile drum magazine developed by HK for the HK21E machine gun can be fitted to the HK417 for use in support and sustained fire applications."

That answers that, if we can't get the HK drums, we'll have to shoot for X-Products 50 round drums for the HK91. X-Products claims, "For those wanting uncompromised performance and the durability to last a lifetime. A US made version of the famous HK G8 50 round drum for your HK91 and G3 style rifle. The X-91 is a .308 caliber drum that is easy to load/unload and boasts a full 50 round capacity. All internal & operating assemblies are made of steel or aluminum. Each drum comes with an easy to follow owner's manual and loading instruction manual. All drums are backed by a hassle free lifetime warranty. HK Parts has had extensive testing done with the X-91 50 round drum magazine with zero issues! This is one of the best drum designs we have encountered to date."

I wonder how far it is to Grand Island, Nebraska from here. I wonder if Grand Island, Nebraska is still there. Of course it is, but the Hornady warehouse might be empty. Columbia is a better idea and I think we'll go there first. On the other hand, Columbia is on I-70 and due east of KC. Does anyone know where they make X-Products drums? Oregon and Washington? Really, that's a long haul. Oh, the prototypes are from Oregon and the production magazines are from Washington. It doesn't matter, that's too far in a PAW world.

I looked at the map and Grand Island is around 475-500 miles, via the short route, through KC! Well, by the time we get out of here, Columbia should have cooled down fairly well. Besides, it's only about 150 miles and we could make that easy in 6 hours. Well, there's probably traffic on the roads blocking the lanes and what not. Jerry always talks about dodging traffic.

We only had that one little traffic problem on the way down, but Dave and Don took care of that. And then, we barely got unpacked and seated for our chicken dinner when that pesky NWS radio went off. He was right about it being during the next 24 hours. It was more like 8 hours. Excuse me, the breaded pork tenderloin sandwiches and french fries are ready. I'll write some more after I've eaten and been to the bathroom.

The Dixons – Chapter 3

I won't bother with our shelter stay; it was B-O-R-I-N-G! We did a lot of planning about what we'd do and when.

At nine months the outside radiation level was 94mR/hr and I couldn't keep the boys in the shelter for fear of a mutiny. So, we moved upstairs on the condition that we'd continue to sleep in the shelter. The first order of business was gathering up the livestock we'd purchased. That went well.

The second order of business was collecting more fuel, that didn't go quite as well, but we managed to accomplish it. And then there was the trip to Springfield and Branson for PRI products. We found what we wanted and paid through the nose for some of it, being the people in possession had a good idea what it was worth.

With that out of the way, June and I visited our neighbors for a second time, finding out who made it and who didn't and checking to see if our biodiesel producer made it. He didn't and not due to the radiation. He had a heart attack the day the missiles flew. But his 19 year-old son made it and he was the one who converted the oil to biodiesel. He needed methanol and sodium hydroxide. Their delivery truck was older than Moses and it ran just fine.

Dave got the garden plot ready while Don and I were out and about completing the various tasks. He even helped June plant the garden and started building the greenhouse. First, he staked it out and dug the foundation which would consist of solid concrete blocks stored in the garage. Next, he assembled the frame walls which he left lying on the ground. Don and I helped him raise them, attach them with the ramset and install the roof trusses.

Once we had that done, we returned to Springfield and broke into the class III dealer's vault. It was worth the effort. He was, among other things, an H&K dealer. Anyone need an MP-5? HK416 or HK417? What barrel length, he had them all. Was this an order for the Springfield PD? Greene County Sheriff? Why would they want USP Tacticals and Compact Tacticals with suppressors? Or suppressed HK416s and HK417s? I could see the MP-5s, but the MP-5SD3? Cops don't usually care if they make noise with their gunfire.

I didn't bother with the H&K precision rifles; I was fairly well covered in that department since we had 20" barrels for the HK417s and 19.9" barrels for the HK416s. The boys disagreed and took 3 PSG1A1s equipped with the Schmidt & Bender 3-12x50mm telescopic sight on fixed mounts. "One for Mom," Dave said.

The dealer had some ammo, but not really what one would call "a lot". Columbia, here we come. This was a different story, entirely. We went after 2 26' rental trucks, the largest they had, with the largest U Haul box trailers we could find. And then, we proceeded to overload both of them, the trailers they were towing, the Suburban and our trailer.

At this point in the PAW, I was more following TOM than Jerry with regard to ammunition under the common prepper's question, "Would you rather have it and not need it or need it and not have it?" We shouldn't run out anytime soon, if ever. If you've read any of TOM's ramblings, he wants a minimum of 5,000 duty rounds per rifle, 1,000 and preferably 2,000 duty rounds per pistol and a minimum of 1,500 duty rounds per shotgun. I take that he isn't much of a wing shot since he never seems to get barrels longer than 20" for his shotgun and they seem to have ghost ring sights.

We, conversely, had 2 Remington 870 combos with smoothbore slug barrel with rifle sights and long barrels with Rem chokes along with 2 11-87Ps. Like TOM, I wasn't much of a wing shot since I'd never figured out how to lead the birds properly.

That .338 Lapua has a bit of kick and one wouldn't be firing hundreds of rounds at any given time, lest they cripple themselves. I don't have anything to compare it with, but I suppose any of the .338 Magnum cartridges would be in the same ballpark. Unless I'm recalling incorrectly, TOM once mentioned that Ron bought a .375 H&H Magnum and it near kicked him to death. From what I've read on the Winchester .338 Magnum, the Remington .338 Ultra-Magnum and similar cartridges being kicked near to death came with the .338 Magnum cartridges.

The rifle came with 4 magazines and I sort of followed TOM on the number of magazines and increased it by 6 for a total of 10. They weren't like the magazines for the Tac-50, either; these were relatively inexpensive at \$75 for a 5-round magazine. If 50 rounds of .338 Lapua didn't do the job, I assumed my shoulder wouldn't be up to my re-loading the magazines and firing more.

Did you look us up on the map yet? That's a photograph and doesn't really show our digs so you can't zoom in on our place like you are able to zoom in on TOM's. Forget it, I forgot about the internet.

I checked the outbuildings and found the hay, straw, and mixed feed. It looked like a lot but we had a milk cow, pregnant, her calf, a 1 year old feeder, a sow, also pregnant, and 3 pigs that ran maybe 100 pounds. As I mentioned earlier we had our biodiesel lined up when he got the methanol and sodium hydroxide and grew the soybeans and extracted the oil. He said he'd have soybean meal after the oil was extracted. There was no rush, we'd been salvaging and scavenging.

Hey, life was hard before the war with the price of fuel and all. Now, hard wouldn't begin to describe what we expected. On top of that was the real question, why had this happened. Surely there must have been something that pushed our attacker(s) over the edge where they felt they had nothing to lose by attacking the United States. Further, we didn't know the extent of the war. There were 10 nuclear powers, for certain, and at least 2 countries, Germany and Japan, that had the means if not the desire to build nuclear weapons.

Towards the end of WW II, Germany had been working on an ICBM and we're not talking Germany to the UK either but Germany to the US. *While the US developed the first nuclear weapons, von Braun and his associates were working on the delivery system. It's nice they ended up on our side rather than Russia's. It was proposed to use an advanced version of the A9 to attack targets on the US mainland from launch sites in Europe, for which it would need to be launched atop a booster stage, the A10.*

Design work on the A10 began in 1940, for a projected first flight to take place in 1946. The initial design was carried out by Ludwig Roth und Graupe and was completed on 29 June 1940. Hermann Oberth worked on the design during 1941, and in December 1941 Walter Thiel proposed that the A10 use an engine composed of six bundled A4 engines, which it was thought would give a total thrust of 180 tonnes. Work on the A10 was resumed in late 1944 under the Projekt Amerika codename, and the A10's design was amended to incorporate a cluster of 6 A4 combustion chambers feeding into a single expansion nozzle. This was later altered to a massive single chamber and single nozzle. Test stands were constructed at Peenemunde for firings of the 200 tonne thrust motor.

It was considered that existing guidance systems would not be accurate enough over a distance of 5,000 km, and it was decided to make the A9 piloted. The pilot was to be guided on his terminal glide towards the target by radio beacons on U-boats and by automatic weather stations landed in Greenland and Labrador.

The final design of the A10 booster was approximately 65 ft (20 m) in height. Powered by a 375,000 lbf (1,670 kN) thrust rocket burning diesel oil and nitric acid, during its 50 second burn it would have propelled its A9 second stage to a speed of about 2,700 mph (4,300 km/h) and an altitude of 245 mi (394 km).

The US had 3 superb delivery systems, the Titan II, the Minuteman and the Peacekeeper. Two were history before we needed them. The LGM-25C Titan II was a liquid fueled 2 stage missile which had a range of 9,300 miles and carried a single 9mt W-53 warhead. The LGM-118 Peacekeeper was a 4 stage missile with the first 3 stages using solid fuel and the 4th liquid fuel. It had a range of 6,000 miles and carried 10 W-87 300kt warheads. The LGM-30G Minuteman III had more range, ~8,100 miles, and was the first MIRV'd warhead, eventually carrying 3 W-78 350kt warheads, for a while. Then the politicians got involved...

While I'm on the subject, let's compare Russia and the US. Russia has a good civil defense program. The US doesn't because it would send the message that we might do a First Strike. Russia has a fail-deadly system known as Dead Hand (codenamed "Perimeter"). The US has a fail-safe system requiring the President and the Secretary of Defense to approve a launch which is then transmitted to the Pentagon where the actual orders are issued. Imagine Hillary as President and having a bad hair day.

The whole purpose behind Nunn and Lugar's *Nuclear Threat Initiative* was to prevent what just happened from happening. I recall seeing a picture of Lugar examining an SS-

18 Satan that was being decommissioned. What, it was an older model and being replaced by a Topol-M? Putin was accommodating during his first tenure but on the second go around his true colors came out. Once a Commie, always a Commie and you can take that to the bank.

There's good news, if you can call it that. It seems that nuclear winter didn't make it to the Ozarks. So, we planted a garden. And, as insurance, built a greenhouse from lumber and Plexiglas or Lexan, can't remember what the guy said. So, not only are we gardening, we're in the construction business. Didn't have a problem finding the bulbs but the fixtures were hard to come by since we decided to go with 4 tube fixture with a warm and cool bulb on each side. To keep the greenhouse warm, we added a pair of 23,000 BTU RedStone Indoor Portable Kerosene Convection Heaters. We saved the rolled plastic for future use.

I had to take another supper break. Over supper we discussed scavenging and whether we needed anything more and whether the risks outweighed the possible gains. If we could add a second battery bank, we could double the amount of time before the generator(s) kicked in. More PV panels and another wind turbine of similar size and configuration also came up. We decided to look after the greenhouse was operational and had the reserve food growing.

The PV panels, wind turbine and submarine batteries came from a source in Springfield and one could hope that there were enough additional panels, a turbine, batteries and the charge controller/inverters to establish a second, independent system. That would finish off the spare space in the basement, leaving just enough room to turn around in. And if we couldn't get the components, we'd just have to do without because the risk began to outweigh the possible gain. Might not be a bad time to locate some more of the Castrol 15w-40.

As far as that pair of Isuzu generators went, we'd never been able to pin down anyone on just how long they'd last before requiring major work. The usual answer was, "Well, that depends..." Tell us something we didn't know! If the generators weren't heavily used and were properly maintained, it might be thousands of hours (speculation) and if they weren't, it could be hundreds (probable).

Which was all the more reason to add a second wind turbine, PV panels on the largest outbuilding and a second battery bank. Plus, it never hurt to have spare charge controller/inverters. We're darned well equipped to protect our possessions now, not that we were in bad shape before we went scavenging.

Our boys were growing up and it wouldn't be that many years before each found someone to share his life with and would need a place of their own. So I made a note to keep an eye out for new mobile homes, just in case. I'd read all of TOM's and Jerry's stories, multiple times. TOM's general theme was intentional communities established either before or after the PAW. Jerry mostly passed on information on how to get by in the after.

On the other hand, in his story *Home Sweet Bunker*, the prepping had all been pre-PAW.

Having enjoyed *Expedition*, I'd been waiting for the Sequel, *The Dark Times*. In times like these one could never be certain it would get written, what with him living in Reno and his assertion in several stories that it would be a prime target. Even if he did get the story written, how was he going to publish it with the internet down?

Best get my mind back on what's important at the moment, like finishing off the greenhouse, tending the livestock and helping with the garden. To think I'd criticized June over the number of Mason jars and Tattler lids and rings. She didn't seem to be overly concerned about what she accumulated, only some of the things I'd accumulated. Looking back I'm surprised she didn't use the argument that I could only fire one weapon at a time. I'd have countered with "2 hands, 2 guns".

One of our neighbors came by this morning asking if we were in the market for horse flesh. I told him we had enough fuel for a few years and he asked what we'd do if our Suburban broke down. That dumbfounded me; we'd completely overlooked that possibility. We had spare filters and a few cases of Castrol 10w-40 in the garage but we didn't have any disks, a spare alternator or any of the things most likely to need repairing/replacing.

He said to keep it in mind because he had a string of mixed breed riding horses and some good used tack. He'd let a horse go with tack for a 1 oz. US Eagle. I didn't realize that Don overheard. But, we sure found out at the supper table. While Don was excitedly discussing the possibility of our getting horses, I noticed that June wasn't eating and I've never know her to pick at her food.

"Are you ok June?"

"I don't really feel well, honey. I checked my temperature and it's 102.6° F."

"It's really not flu season. Could be something you ate?"

"I've eaten exactly the same food as all of you, do you feel ill?"

"I don't. Dave, Don do either of you feel ill?"

"Nope."

"Me either."

"You've had all of the childhood diseases haven't you?"

"Most of them anyway."

“And you got the series of injections I arranged for?”

“All but one. It seemed so silly and I missed the appointment so I didn’t bother to re-schedule.”

“Which one?”

“AVA.”

“The anthrax vaccine?”

“Yes.”

“Uh... let me get the Cipro and a pint bottle of Hexachlorophene soap that Doc prescribed. You need to bathe and medicate and go to bed. We’re going to use exam gloves and masks until this has run its course. There are a dozen pint bottles of Hexachlorophene cleaner so we’ll all bathe or shower and can wash ourselves from head to toe. Since we have such a large supply of Cipro, I’ll have to try and remember if he told me we could use it as a prophylactic.”

“What is it Dad?”

“I’m not a doctor Don, but Anthrax has flu like symptoms. It’s passed by spores that could have already been here in the soil. It could also be biological warfare. The Russians had a well-developed Anthrax program. Years ago Hexachlorophene was available over the counter under the name *pHisoHex*. Due to it being a possible carcinogen, the FDA made it prescription only in the late ‘60s or early ‘70s. It’s an effective antibacterial, but must be used carefully. You have Dave wash your back and any parts you can’t reach and do the same for him. I’ll help your mother.

“There are three types of Anthrax, pulmonary, gastrointestinal and cutaneous. During the 2001 Anthrax attack, 5 of 22 people infected died.

“Oh, he gave a list of don’ts concerning PhisoHex.

- PhisoHex must not be used on burned or denuded skin. Application to burns has produced neurotoxicity and death.
- PhisoHex must not be used for bathing infants (see WARNINGS). Infants may absorb the active compound in PhisoHex more readily than older children and adults. Such absorption has been associated with central nervous system effects such as convulsions.
- PhisoHex must not be used as an occlusive dressing, wet pack, or lotion.
- PhisoHex must not be used routinely for prophylactic total body bathing.
- PhisoHex must not be used as a vaginal pack, or on any mucous membranes.
- PhisoHex must not be used on persons with sensitivity to any of its components.

- PhisoHex must not be used on persons who have demonstrated primary light sensitivity to halogenated phenol derivatives because of the possibility of cross-sensitivity to hexachlorophene.
- PhisoHex should be kept out of the eyes. If contact occurs, the patient should rinse with cold water as soon as possible and contact a physician.
- PhisoHex should not be used in sensitive areas such as the scrotum and perineum. If contact occurs, these areas should be rinsed thoroughly.
- PhisoHex is for external use only.”

“Is Mom going to be ok?”

“The odds are 78% in her favor. The faster we react, the better off she’ll be. And, before you ask, I’m not inclined to take her to Springfield since we can do anything they can do.”

I knocked on the bathroom door. “Is it alright if I come in and wash your back?”

“Uh, sure, there’s nothing you haven’t seen already.”

“I brought a package of disposable wash cloths. We shouldn’t use any non-disposables to avoid transferring any spores in case you do have Anthrax. Did you take the Cipro?”

“Yes.”

“We could have used Doxycycline but the Cipro is a newer prescription.”

“How did you get the PhisoHex and Cipro?”

“I asked. Doc is sort of a prepper, you know.”

“I didn’t know that.”

“When you get to feeling better, you should go through the drug box. I can practically guarantee you’ll be surprised. You didn’t eat supper. Can I get you something?”

“A cup of Chamomile tea and some clear chicken broth?”

“Sure. That does it; I’ll be back in a bit.”

Symptoms of anthrax differ depending on the type of anthrax.

Symptoms of cutaneous anthrax start 1 to 7 days after exposure:

- An itchy sore develops that is similar to an insect bite. This sore may blister and form a black ulcer (sore).
- The sore is usually painless, but it is often surrounded by swelling.

- A scab often forms, and then dries and falls off within 2 weeks. Complete healing can take longer.

Symptoms of inhalation anthrax:

- Begins with fever, malaise, headache, cough, shortness of breath, and chest pain
- Fever and shock may occur later

Symptoms of gastrointestinal anthrax usually occur within 1 week and may include:

- Abdominal pain
- Bloody diarrhea
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Mouth sores
- Nausea and vomiting (the vomit may contain blood)

Based on June's symptoms, it appeared to me that she probably either had the flu or inhalation anthrax. Cipro wouldn't do much for the flu but it was better to treat the possibility of Anthrax than assume she had the flu because it wasn't flu season and she'd been working in the garden, bare handed. The very same garden that had manure incorporated.

The most common form of Anthrax encountered was cutaneous anthrax. If the word Anthrax is capitalized, that's me. Otherwise it's something I copied from another file. I won't claim to have all the medical references I'd like to have. I do have more than I can understand.

Examples: *No Doctor, USCG Medical Manual and Virtual Naval Hospital. More: Hospital Corpsman Manual, Ranger Medical Handbook, Special Forces Medical Handbook, Special Operations Forces Medical Handbook, Strategic Interventions for People in Crisis, Trauma, and Disaster, Survival Medicine, USAF Independent Duty Medical Technician Medical and Dental Treatment Protocols, Wound Closure Manual* and however many more buried in my numbered Army Field Manuals.

Take 2 Tylenol and call me in the morning is probably right at least 80% of the time. The rest of the time it's like the guy who was bitten on his bottom by a rattlesnake, *you gonna die*. I did give June 2 Tylenol ES to go with her tea and chicken broth. You shouldn't use aspirin, especially with children. You may know chicken broth by another name, *stock*, and it comes in fairly large jars. Bouillon cubes are concentrated stock with a whole lot of salt added, but they keep forever.

About acetaminophen (Tylenol), maximum daily dose is 4 grams or 8 extra strength (500mg) tablets. LD₅₀ is 7 grams. It turns into a white syrup and clogs your liver, before it kills you. If your doctor suggests hydrocodone, go for Norco, it has varying amounts of hydrocodone and 325mg of acetaminophen. In January 2001, the US Food and Drug

Administration asked manufacturers of prescription combination products that contain acetaminophen to limit the amount of acetaminophen to no more than 325 milligrams (mg) in each tablet or capsule. The label says hydrocodone/APAP. APAP is Paracetamol, e.g., acetaminophen. Paracetamol overdose results in more calls to poison control centers in the US than overdose of any other pharmacological substance. Thus the FDA's 2001 request.

I was tempted to stay with June even though it meant wearing a mask. But I couldn't be certain that I wouldn't remove or knock off the mask while asleep. I took the couch but set the alarm and checked on her every 3 hours. Two days later, her fever broke and she began to feel a little better. I kept her on soft foods for another day, just in case. Anthrax can have a long incubation period which seemed not to be the case in this instance if indeed she had Anthrax. Anthrax can have a moderately long recovery period which did seem to be the case in this instance. Without a medical opinion, all we could say was we suspected inhalation/pulmonary Anthrax.

It may or may not have been a close call, but it wasn't number 2. Yeah, you know, TOM claims bad things happen in threes. That again? I seem to recall him giving specific evidence with respect to his family. If I recall correctly, it got to 4 quickly and before the year ended got to 9; 2001 wasn't a good year for many folks.

If an IV is called for, Doc said to use D5NS, except in case of blood loss. Normal saline can be used any time.

The Dixons – Chapter 4

These past 2 years haven't been all that good for us. We discussed returning to Ballwin, several times, but invariably concluded it might not be worth the risk. Our home didn't have as much as a standby generator, let alone all the special preparations we'd made for our bug out cabin. On paper, our Ballwin home was worth far more than our cabin, just not enough to take the risk.

We'd managed to get with a neighbor and gotten help birthing the calves and pigs; twice on the calves and four times on the pigs. We didn't have any trouble finding market weight hogs or getting the feeder beeves butchered, cut and wrapped. The processing facility even made the breaded pork tenderloins for us from loins along with preparing the hams, smoked picnics, bacon and Canadian style bacon. They also rendered the leaf lard and kept the extra fat to render into additional lard they'd market.

We had a small amount of Italian sausage prepared along with a large amount of American sausage. With regard to the beef, they wanted to know if we wanted Tri-tips. Since we were unfamiliar with the cut, we told them no. However, we did want both round steak and swiss steak. June had a super recipe for swiss steak. It was the tomato version not the mushroom/celery gravy version. About that, we had a neighbor who disliked tomatoes and had a swiss steak recipe using Campbell's mushroom and celery soups.

The facility prepared various sausages, including pepperoni, so we bought some to slice for pizza. One of our favorite pizzas was topped with pepperoni and green pepper. We also like Chili Relleños and grew a variety of peppers in our garden including green peppers, Anaheim peppers and pepperoncini peppers. We pickled the pepperoncini peppers and they made a nice accompaniment to Italian meals. Italian either meant pizza or one of a variety of pasta dishes since we had both a pasta extruder and roller.

On the other hand, these past 2 years haven't been all that bad for us. We are growing our own food, for the most part, and can get what we need in the way of staples, excluding coffee, tea and cocoa. We'd planned ahead with respect to coffee, tea and cocoa. We had 240 57 oz. cans of Folgers classic, Bigelow teas by the case repacked in one-gallon cans (not no. 10 cans which hold 3 quarts) and Swiss Miss in 6-gallon pails plus Hersey's cocoa stacked deep, nearly a full shelf worth.

Sort of sounds like the opening lines of **A Tale of Two Cities**, *It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way – in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only.*

I didn't have that in mind, really.

The same went for common staples like baking powder and baking soda. They weren't THAT expensive and neither were gallon jars of regular olive oil. Extra virgin olive oil is something that Rachael Ray and the other Food Network stars promote. It's about the flavor, not, the usefulness. We also had other vegetable oils stored along with those 6 pound cans of Crisco. Spices in sealed glass containers have a longer life than Emeril would have you believe. He's mostly referring to open spice containers and does have a point. We bought spices in multiples of the smaller jars. The most expensive spice we had was Saffron, for some of the Mexican dishes like Spanish rice. It also contains a carotenoid dye, crocin, which imparts a rich golden-yellow hue to dishes and textiles.

We used no. 2 cans, no. 2½ cans and no. 10 cans in addition to one-gallon cans, 5-gallon pails and 6-gallon pails. Our pressure canners were 30 quart All American, we had 4, and our metal can sealer had a huge assortment of heads with spares for no. 2 cans, no. 2½ cans and no. 10 cans in addition to one-gallon cans. Were we prepared? We were prepared. The second floor and attic of the garage were used for storage of empty cans, jars and lids.

Although I mentioned Mason jars earlier, the quantity was omitted. Two gross cases of quarts and ½ gross of pint jars, a grand total of 4,320 jars plus 4,500 Tattler lids and 5,000 Tattler rings, only 500 extra rings. They were heavy enough empty; can you imagine how much they would weigh when filled? It was about an 8 year supply, not counting the fact that 95% or more would be recycled. It also explains why I didn't have much of a problem with the quantity of ammo on hand.

We didn't have a lot of calibers. We had all Midwest USA had on hand in .22, 5.56, 7.62, .223, .308, .380, 9mm, .410, .45acp, .45 Colt and .45-70, in calibers and 12 gauge in gauges. I told you the trucks and trailers were overloaded, didn't I? We filled the volume, to heck with the weight. It was presumed to be a one way trip and the vehicles would serve as storage, hence were loaded to make every size available even if it took extra time with the loading. There was nothing half-cocked in our plan.

Well, excluding the firearms we added on another trip to a distributor who carried Ruger and Winchester. But we only took the Suburban on that trip and picked up an empty U Haul trailer upon arrival. We didn't actually get THAT many, just what he had in stock. If you've ever checked out Gallery of Guns, you should be aware that they don't really stock that many of any particular firearm; just what they can get and afford. Cost wasn't an issue, only quantity in this case and there was more than enough room in the U Haul. On that trip, we got our first semi with a 53' box trailer.

You don't really believe that TOM went to Prescott, Arizona when he wrote *When All Else Fails* do you? Only on the internet and those were actual inventories. TOM really should have used a different title on that one story, like *You've got to be Kidding Me*. I remember looking at the number of downloads on Jerry's website and that story title seemed to offend people. Trust me, I know and it's nothing out of your pocket or am I

trying to get into... never mind TOM got into trouble that way. One of us has a dirty mind, LOL. I think the term is salacious, Jerry uses it.

“The fence is nice to keep the livestock in; however it wouldn’t even slow down someone trying to get in.”

“June, no one has tried to *get in* as you call it.”

“You mean, yet, don’t you Jerry?”

“Ok, no has tried to *get in* yet.”

“What are we going to do when they try?”

“It hasn’t been a problem so far. I suspect someone saw us cleaning out that class III dealer in Springfield. I must say that I doubt anyone beyond the 4 of us actually knows what our capabilities are.”

“So, them not knowing will keep them at bay? Get real would you. Several people must know or suspect that we have a garden and an all season greenhouse. Jerry writes about PIR sensors in some of his stories. We could get those from a Radio Shack, could we not?”

“We could if someone hadn’t already taken them. We’d want passive infrared wireless motion sensors. Radio Shack has several kinds. Assuming for the moment we encircle the immediate area, excluding the pasture, with them, how would we know which sensor was tripped?”

The components we ended up with were GE Choice Alert Control Center, GE Choice Alert Motion Sensors (16), GE Choice Alert Signal Repeaters (32) and GE Choice Alert Keychain Remotes (4). The sensors covered a 110° area allowing us to have one zone north, east, south and west, each with 4 sensors. The repeaters were necessary because the wireless range was limited to 150’ and the keychain remotes allowed any of the four of us to activate or deactivate the system.

An ideal system would have used something entirely different, an infrared beam with mirrors, a so called through beam photoelectric sensor. When the beam was broken at any point, the alarm sounded. We couldn’t find such a system and we weren’t sure of the distance the system could cover, thus our choice of the GE system, which Radio Shack carried. We later decided to add the GE Choice Alert Alarm 130db Siren and the GE Choice Alert Silent LED Alert mounted next to the exterior doors. Since the sirens only sounded for 3 minutes, this device would tell us if the sirens had been sounded in our absence. Did I forget to mention that the price was right?

Two years ago I couldn't spell scavenger and now we were skilled at the task. We no sooner had the security system installed and tested than FEMA and the Missouri National Guard showed up in Springfield. The Guard was there to take a census and provide limited supplies. FEMA, conversely, had different mission(s), collecting firearms and collecting precious metals. Their list of precious metals even included copper. It made us very happy that the cabin roof was corrugated sheet metal instead of copper.

We had done just fine since the war with our firearms, having not needed them to that point in time. Neither agency waited for people to go to them, they went to the people. That gave us some time to take the necessary precautions and conceal everything except for a single shot .22 rifle and a single shot 12 gauge shotgun and one single action firearm each. Each person was being allowed to retain one hunting weapon so we could have had 4. Each person was also allowed to retain one single action firearm. We were only able to acquire the single .22 and 12 gauge and they weren't inexpensive; cheap maybe, but not inexpensive. The bores were fine on both firearms despite the rust showing on the exteriors.

We hid the fuel tankers and other stored goods down the road a piece in deep woods thereby eliminating the need to explain the ammo or fuel. They eyed the PV panels and second wind turbine but didn't try to take them away from us. After FEMA left, the Guard put in their appearance and did the census. It included information where we were from in addition to the usual census data. The Sergeant seemed impressed with our setup and asked how long before the attack we'd bugged out. I told him 8 hours and that we were no more than settled when the EAN message came.

He cast a knowing eye at the various tire tracks in and around our buildings. Unfortunately, the ground had been soft when we were forced to move the trucks and trailers. He suggested we hold off a while before bringing our vehicles back home. It sounded like a plan to me.

"I never thought I'd live to see the day that we were forced to carry Ruger Blackhawks in .45 Colt."

"Be happy they let use carry handguns at all."

"I wonder if that's why?"

"Why what?"

"TOM includes single action firearms in his stories."

"I've noticed that. I think he just wanted to grow up to be a cowboy."

"But why? That's as tough of a job as there is."

"In that case, maybe he didn't like Willy's song."

“I doubt it’s that. Maybe his father made fun of his wanting to be a cowboy.”

“He didn’t get along with his father did he?”

“That story he wrote, *Weather Patterns* described the relationship as *fire and ice*.”

“It’s a good thing you and your father got along as well as you did.”

“Oh, we had our moments. But, I had a lot to lose and learned to keep my mouth shut. Nobody gets along all the time. I just learned to consider the source and the fact he was an older generation raised during a time when values were different. He may not have always been right, but he was never wrong, if you catch my drift. He carried an M1 Garand during Korea and was with the last group evacuating from the Chosin. That’s about all he said about his service in Korea.”

“Wounded?”

“You know, he never really said. He was typical of his generation though. From some of my reading on the subject, many soldiers don’t like to discuss the conflicts they’ve been in except with others who were there. I wasn’t old enough for Vietnam and when they switched to a Voluntary military we weren’t fighting anyone so I got a job. It has had its rewards. Even without the inheritance, we would have had the home paid off early and working on a nice supplemental retirement package.”

“Except for the war.”

“Yep. That ruined many people’s plans for retirement... hell, even for living.”

“You told Dave we’d never end up being Ozark farmers. Admittedly 5 acres isn’t really a farm. We most certainly are involved in many farming activities.”

“Tending a small herd of livestock and gardening isn’t really farming. We need all the pasture we have for what livestock we have. In many locations, we couldn’t raise our small herd on 5 acres.”

“Do you think FEMA will be back?”

“I haven’t the foggiest but I hope not. The Sergeant was really on his toes. He told me to wait a while before we brought our vehicles back. I doubt those FEMA people would recognize a Ryder rental if it ran over them. We didn’t have any good camouflage netting so we used our old green tarps. Let’s hope they don’t decide to do a flyover.”

“Jerry, what’s FEMA ever done to us? You’ve had a bone to pick with them ever since Dubya told Brownie he was doing a fine job.”

“Was Brownie doing a fine job?”

“Obviously not.”

“FEMA has become the target of choice for many federal actions or inactions since Katrina, right or wrong. This is a perfect example of what I’m saying honey. The Guard should have been charged with collecting firearms and precious metals and FEMA with taking a census and distributing a helping hand. I believe in my heart that the role reversal was because the Guard wouldn’t have gotten involved in collecting firearms or precious metals because their oath is to the Constitution, not the President.

“And, while we’re on the subject of the President, where the hell has he been hiding out the last 2 years? They criticized Dubya for everything whether it was within his power to affect or not. So, they elected Osama Obama for not 1 but 2 terms. He didn’t accomplish much in 8 years beyond passing National Healthcare and approving the mission to take out bin Laden.

“This Republican we have in the White House seems to have the bad traits of both the previous two Presidents. I’ve never considered myself a Libertarian or a member of the Tea Party but that’s about to change, if and when we have elections again. The only thing the boys and I moved from our property was the extra ammo. The firearms are hidden at the end of the shelter escape tunnel, just so you know where to look.”

“All of them?”

“Except for Ruger Blackhawks and the 2 long arms I picked up to avoid questions.”

“You got them in all 3 barrel lengths?”

“We got the revolvers in 7½”, 5½” and 4⅝”. We made another trip to Midway USA and got 4-each 6-round Hunter leather cartridge belt slide ammo carriers in .45 Colt caliber. They barely fit between the belt loops on our jeans. We also got large frame single action revolver belt holsters with the straps in the same sizes. They’re secure but awkward.”

“And probably draw less attention than western style gunbelts.”

“Undoubtedly.”

The Dixons – Chapter 5

We didn't carry the revolvers at home, only when we went into Springfield. Eventually, we found some 2" leather belts and assembled separate rigs for the single action arms that we could change the holsters as needed. I favored the 7½", Dave and Don the 5½" and June the 4⅝". Even then, we carried the ankle rigs for the pistols and spare magazines. We did find ourselves going into Springfield more often as the garden and greenhouse were in full production, to barter and sell our excess produce, fresh, not canned.

Our presence didn't go unnoticed and June's, "You mean, yet, don't you Jerry?" came to pass. The first incident was a pickup making a slow pass down Wild Cherry Lane. Don noticed and brought it up at supper.

"Saw an old blue Dodge pickup make a slow pass after we got home."

"What was he or she doing?"

"Giving us a careful once over."

"I knew it!"

"Maybe one of us should keep an eye out tonight. Might be a good time to see how well those AN/PVS-24s work mounted in front of our EXPS3s."

"Boys and their toys!"

"Thank you June. Lately I'd been feeling a bit long in the tooth (38)."

"Are we doing shifts?"

"Three four-hour shifts and your Mom can get her beauty sleep. We'll use the CP-200s on, say, channel 3. And, I don't want to hear any wailing about your babies. They're 15 and 16 and close to 16 and 17. When Audie Murphy was 20, he destroyed 6 German tanks, killed 240 German soldiers for which he was promoted to 1st Lieutenant and awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor."

"But he had a Browning .50 caliber machine gun."

"Mounted on a burning M-10 tank destroyer."

"Ahhwww..."

"I'll take the mid-watch, 10 to 2. You decide who has first watch and last watch."

"What's with Mom?"

“That’s just your mother being a mother. I’d recommend the HK417s.”

“How come we don’t have grenades for the H&K M-320?”

“That’s not an H&K M-320. I think it’s called the AG-C/GLM and it has an auxiliary flip up ladder sight. H&K developed those from the AC-36 specifically for the HK416 and HK417. As far as 40mm grenades go, maybe the Springfield PD has them since these weapons appeared to be an order for them. I think the less lethal rounds include tear gas, OC, rubber balls and a sponge round. The only place we could get lethal rounds would probably be Fort Leonard Wood. The lethal rounds include High Explosive, High Explosive Dual Purpose, Canister and Thermobaric, that I know of. Just use the HK417 with the AN/PVS-24s and EXPS3s tonight.”

Don took the early shift and I relieved him just before 10.

“Anything?”

“Nah, I’ve been sweeping too, at least everything within the PIR perimeter. This AN/PVS-24 doesn’t have the range we need.”

“They’re supposed to have unrestricted FOM etc., etc., etc.”

“Maybe they do, I’m just saying they don’t seem to have range of that AN/PVS-27 MUNS.”

“They should, they cost about the same, eleven grand.”

“WHAT??? I have a setup that’s worth as much as your Tac-338?”

“Close. Hang on a minute and I’ll get the MUNS off the McMillan and do a comparison. I’ll let you know in the morning.”

There was one difference. According to Optics Planet when I’d looked at Night Vision, the MUNS was available to the public if they had the money. The EOTech M2124, *This item is available for sale to Military and Law Enforcement Agencies only. Documentation required may include a Purchase Order on department/institution letterhead and additional certification forms. Certain federal, state, and/or local laws and regulations may apply.*

The AN/PVS-27, *This item is available for sale to Military and Law Enforcement Agencies only. Documentation required may include a Purchase Order on department/institution letterhead and additional certification forms. Certain federal, state, and/or local laws and regulations may apply.* Funny, June didn’t have any trouble buying one.

Sneaky helps. The website is flir dot com/gs which changes to gs dot flir dot com. When one tries to download the Tactical brochure, it loads ½ way and stops. The second time you bring it up, it loads about 90% and stops. One more time and you have the brochure because the first portions were stored as .temp files. The main thing is don't even try to export it. Jails are houses with bars on the windows. You'll get buried so deep inside you'd sell your mother's soul just to see the bars.

Did I just admit to a crime? It was on the web and not protected so I doubt it. Besides products of this nature with Gen III tubes all run about eleven grand. Do you really want to tie up twenty-five grand in a rifle, ammo and optics? Don't forget the suppressor, I'm sure it REALLY reduces the report of a .338, .416 or .50BMG rifle. The target won't hear the shot because he's dead before the sound reaches him.

Look, if TOM can have a Tac-50 with Jet suppressor, I can have a Tac-338 with an Elite Iron suppressor and next lifetime, we'll buy ammo. Plus, we might as well have the MUNS, they can only lock you up once. What do you mean consecutive sentences? Oh yeah, the guy who did the shooting in Tucson back in 2011. Seven consecutive life sentences plus 140 years. He got off easy. Closure? The only closure some of the families might have had is if he received the same sentence as William Wallace (Braveheart). Hanged until half dead, disemboweled, decapitated and drawn and quartered. But no, we're civilized.

I could see the military springing for \$11,000 sight, but the Springfield PD, no way. When I returned and relieved Don, I tried first the AN/PVS-24 and then switched to the AN/PVS-27. I could see the fence with both scopes so I switched back to the AN/PVS-24. These EOTech sights are nice, albeit expensive if you have to pay for them.

There was no activity on my watch and Dave relieved me at 3:55. I explained Don's opinion of the AN/PVS-24 and how I had tested it against the AN/PVS-27, receiving the same results. He thought that Don may have just been tired or had too high of expectations about the night sight. He checked and could make out the fence all the way around the property except where a building blocked his vision.

We maintained the night watches, tended to the livestock and helped June with the gardening and canning. The following weekend we took our excess produce to the Farmer's Market and left the boys home *to keep an eye on the place*. When we returned around 4 pm, there was an old blue Dodge pickup parked down the road and the boys had some old codger tied up and under close guard.

"What's going on?"

"We caught this guy trying to sneak in the greenhouse when we broke for lunch. He won't answer any questions. He seems to know a lot of cuss words though."

"What's your name?"

“Kiss my a**.”

“Is that your first name or last name.”

“Now see here, I wasn’t doing anything wrong.”

“Were you or were you not entering our greenhouse?”

“Just checking it out.”

“At the minimum you were trespassing. The boys could have shot you.”

“They had their safeties on.”

“Are you sure?”

A four-five round burst dug a hole in the ground and sent a shower of rocks and pebbles into the man. While the firearms were normally carried with the safety on, the selector switch was ambidextrous and could be switched to semi or full auto without indication. It had been Dave that fired. Don would have probably just shot the guy.

“Uhhh...”

“By the way, the rifles are select fire .308 NATO, but at this range, the 5.56 would be just as destructive. Now, what were you doing here?”

“Looking for something to eat.”

“Did it ever occur to you to park out front, come to the front door and knock? I’m sure we could have found something for you to do to earn a meal or more.”

“I won’t beg.”

“I don’t blame you, we won’t scrounge either. Offering to do a little work in exchange for something to eat isn’t scrounging, it’s simply barter.”

“How come you have those machine guns? FEMA came though claiming all the guns except one revolver and one long arm.”

“That would be one single action revolver, like this one. They won’t let you keep semi auto pistols like this one. Do you understand clearly what I’m implying or do we just shoot you?”

I noticed both boys moving their selectors to full.

“I won’t tell anyone, promise.”

“Safe your weapons boys.”

“Bull crap!” June said as she fired her G-30, putting one round into the old guy’s forehead. “I’ll be darned if I have to watch my back against some old coot like that sneaking around while I’m working in the garden!”

“Dave, get his keys and go get the Dodge. We’ll drive him part way back to Springfield and drop the pickup off on the shoulder of I-44.”

“June, you really should learn to control your temper.”

“If we’re going to continue to have these kinds of problems, I’d rather let the food rot in the greenhouse and garden than take anymore to Springfield. And the things we’re taking simply can’t be preserved, so I can’t can it, dry it or freeze it.”

She had a point. We didn’t barter much for our food since we didn’t need much. The things we did need seemed to be in very short supply. Fortunately, people had been into coin collections or whatever and pre-65 silver was in use. The dime was valued at \$4 and the quarter at \$10. That’s slightly inflated above the spot price of silver when the war happened and I assumed that the inflation was due to a short supply and large demand (Adam Smith).

That was in Springfield under semi-civilized conditions of the PAW. Away from the city, it was more like every person for themselves. Dave and I drove towards Springfield and at a crossover a ways outside of town I made us official and used the crossover to get pointed back northeast. About 3 miles up the road, I pulled over and had Dave join me.

“Are we just going to leave him in the back of the pickup?”

“Yeah, he’s in no condition to drive.”

“What’s with Mom?”

“You heard her, the same as I did. I suppose it’s the hard work, the stress, not knowing when the 2nd shoe will drop and just the overall PAW situation. It has to be frustrating to find out someone is trying to steal food you worked long hard hours growing.”

“Second shoe?”

“Every heard the old saying, *bad things happen in threes*?”

“I heard you mention it to Mom. What’s that all about?”

“That author Tired Old Man that I read claims that *bad things happen in threes*. It depends upon how you view things. If a person, your Mom for example, gets Anthrax

that's a personal disaster and may or may not affect anyone else. We used masks and gloves and avoided getting it until the Cipro healed her. The war, on the other hand affected the whole country or large portions of it. That would fall within his definition of a *bad thing*. Another example might be Yellowstone erupting explosively or the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ) having a major series of earthquakes like it did a little over 200 years ago, knock on wood.

"Anyway, the survivors of the first are trying to sort themselves out from the first event when the second happens, just compounding their problems. And, before they can get fully over the second event a third occurs. His favorite for a while was a joking reference to an asteroid strike."

"Can that happen?"

"Anything can happen. Our Moon was apparently formed from the debris ejected into space when a large asteroid struck the Earth. At least that is the current theory. There are three recorded Yellowstone eruptions and some claim we're overdue for the fourth.

"Because uplift rates associated with large New Madrid earthquakes could not have occurred continuously over geological timescales without dramatically altering the local topography, studies have concluded that the seismic activity there cannot have gone on for longer than 64,000 years, making the NMSZ a young feature, or earthquakes and the associated uplift migrate around the area over time, or that the NMSZ has short periods of activity interspersed with long periods of quiet.

"The first known written record of an earthquake felt in the NMSZ was from a French missionary traveling up the Mississippi with a party of explorers. At 1 PM, on Christmas Day 1699, at a site near the present-day location of Memphis, the party was startled by a short period of ground shaking. The biggest quake since 1811–1812 was a 6.6-magnitude quake on October 31, 1895, with an epicenter at Charleston, Missouri. The quake damaged virtually all buildings in Charleston, creating sand volcanoes by the city, cracked a pier on the Cairo Rail Bridge and toppled chimneys in St. Louis, Missouri, Memphis, Tennessee, Gadsden, Alabama and Evansville, Indiana. The next biggest quake was a 5.4-magnitude quake on November 9, 1968, near Dale, Illinois. The quake damaged the civic building at Henderson, Kentucky and was felt in 23 states. People in Boston said their building swayed. It is the biggest recorded quake with an epicenter in Illinois in that states recorded history.

"Instruments were installed in and around the area in 1974 to closely monitor seismic activity. Since then, more than 4,000 earthquakes have been recorded, most of which were too small to be felt. On average, one earthquake per year is large enough to be felt in the area."

"How far is New Madrid from here?"

"Maybe 260 miles by road."

“And St. Louis?”

“It’s closer; maybe 165 miles.”

“How do you know these things?”

“Oh, I read TOM and Jerry plus a few other PAW fiction authors. I’ve read everything TOM and Jerry have published. Jerry’s scenarios vary from story to story but TOM was in the Air Force during the Cuban Missile Crisis and mostly focuses on Global Thermo-nuclear War.”

“He sure hit the nail on the head this time.”

“I think it was inevitable as long as there were countries with nuclear weapons and opposing viewpoints. If Sam Nunn (former Senator, Dem-GE) and Richard Lugar (former Senator, Rep-IN) had their way, we wouldn’t have had the potential underlying the recent war. There are many causes of war and I suppose one could summarize them as food, water and shelter in the greater scheme of things. Shelter would come in the form of needing more space to house the country’s population or to grow agricultural crops to feed the multitudes.”

“So, was it Russia or China that attacked us?”

“Why would you ask Dave? What difference would it make?”

“Oh well, I was thinking about China with their population of what, 1.4 billion?”

“Well it was more like 1.5-1.6 billion when the war happened. We don’t really know who attacked us since the President omitted that bit of information from his announcement. If it was China, their population would have to be much lower. If it were Russia, the loss of life would be much lower because they actually have a Civil Defense Program and substantial sheltering available. They could shelter their population before making a first strike. The country with the most shelters available is Switzerland with a shelter spot for every member of their population.”

“Switzerland is neutral.”

“Yes they are and their reserve Army is a significant percentage of their population, although they’ve been scaling down. Even the Nazis didn’t attack Switzerland and the Swiss shot down both Axis and Allied planes during WW II. I read in a story, that a Nazi asked a Swiss what he’d do if Germany invaded Switzerland with a force twice their size. The Swiss said, *shoot twice and go home.*”

“So, about this theory that TOM has about bad things happening in threes; do you believe it?”

“I don’t know what to believe. I suppose anything is possible. Who would have thought that our first encounter with an outside element would have been some unarmed old coot with his bones showing?”

“That probably made him more desperate. But why didn’t he try salvaging?”

“Oh, you will always find people within a society who think it’s easier to take something than work for it. That’s why we had so many prisons.”

“You mentioned WW II. Does the most recent war count as WW III?”

“The World Wars of the 20th century took place on almost every populated continent on Earth. Many of the states who fought in the First World War also fought in the Second, although not always on the same sides.

“The two World Wars of the 20th century caused unprecedented casualties and destruction across the theaters of conflict. The numbers killed in the wars are estimated at between 60 and 100 million people. Civilians suffered as badly as or worse than soldiers, and the distinction between military combatants and non-combatant civilians was often overlooked or ignored.

“Both world wars saw large scale murders. The Ottomans were responsible for the death of over one million Armenians. The Nazis were responsible for multiple genocides during the Second World War, most notably the Holocaust. Both the Soviet Union and United States deported and interned minority groups within their own borders, and largely due to this conflict later many ethnic Germans were expelled in much of Eastern Europe.

“Advances in technology were responsible for a large amount of casualties. The First World War saw major use of chemical weapons. The Second World War was also the first conflict in which nuclear weapons were used, devastating the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

“World War III is generally considered a hypothetical successor to World War II and is often suggested to be nuclear, devastating in nature and likely much more violent than both WW I and WW II. This war is anticipated and planned for by military and civil authorities, and explored in fiction in many countries. Concepts range from purely conventional scenarios or a limited use of nuclear weapons to the destruction of the planet. World War IV is sometimes mentioned as a hypothetical successor to World War III or as a plot element in books, movies or video games. In terms of damage wrought, perhaps, but we don’t even know who was involved.”

The Dixons – Chapter 6

“What did you do with the body?”

“We drove close to Springfield and used a crossover to get on the northeast bound lane. We drove about 3 miles this way and abandoned the pickup. Anyone coming upon the scene would assume that the vehicle was headed in our direction. That gives us plausible deniability.”

“You’ve been reading too much fiction.”

“It’s easier than explaining why my wife shot some unarmed old coot between the eyes.”

“But he...”

“Save it for someone who cares. It’s probably better you shot him than one of the boys. They’ll surely have their chance one of these days.”

“He wasn’t unarmed. This fell out when you loaded him into the back of the pickup.”

“I’ll be damned; I haven’t seen one of those in years.”

“What is it?”

“A 3rd series Colt Detectives Special in .38 Special. The 1st series was one of the first snub-nosed revolvers.”

[The third/final series has a shroud below the barrel for the ejection rod.]

“We have to keep an eye open for some ammo. Hmm, look at this; it only has 2 rounds in it. That may explain why he didn’t pull it on the boys when they caught him.”

“That isn’t it Dad, we had him cold with our HK417s. If he’d have made any move towards a pocket or anything, we’d have cut him down.”

“Don’t be so bloodthirsty or in a hurry to kill someone. That will stay with you for a lifetime. It will be bad enough if you have to do it when we’re openly attacked, Heaven forbid. Times may have changed but you weren’t brought up to think in those terms. Not that I don’t understand, of course.”

The remaining garden and greenhouse crops weren’t something that we couldn’t consume or preserve and we stopped taking food to the Farmer’s Market in Springfield for the remainder of the year. We didn’t can much more than we ate up. Some of the things we’d been able to trade for or purchase outright in Springfield had been salt, wheat, oats, rice and beans. Commercial greenhouses in Springfield were being used to grow

food crops year round and there had been interstate trading going on to get things like the rice and salt from Arkansas, wheat from Kansas, with beans and oats being produced locally.

We had to get a cycle going where we produced a calf each year. If we did that, we'd have a market weight ~1,250 beef to butcher each year. We consumed a lot of protein in our diet, animal or vegetable. We worked hard harvesting firewood to sell. We kept any hardwoods we found to use in our fireplace because hardwoods put out more heat. A fair portion of what we were harvesting was softwoods, mostly in the pine family. We cut some white oak, shagbark hickory and a rare black walnut or rarer still English walnut.

Because we had been cutting down trees and standing dead trees, we were surprised that much of the wood was walnut. Apparently something was attacking walnut trees, especially the English walnuts. It may have been only in appearances, however, since black walnuts were more prevalent in the area. Now, I've read TOM's stories about making a living by harvesting firewood and that's not what we were doing. There weren't that many dead trees to begin with and I was determined to be neither a forester nor farmer.

We did have an occasional customer for hickory, the locker plant in Springfield. They processed a lot of pork and need hickory to smoke the brined meat. As long as we kept our rack full of dried oak, we'd sell them the hickory. Sell isn't the right word, exchange fits more correctly. We give them a load of hickory and they process our meat. This year we had a large litter of hogs twice and after taking what we needed for our use, sold the remainder at the Farmer's Market. In fact that last trip to Springfield was to pick up the pork to sell at the Farmer's Market. Pork only, we used a full beef every year and their appetites just seem to get bigger.

We did well in that we sold the meat and acquired the remaining salt, rice, wheat, oats and beans. There were more hams, picnics and sausage each time than we could eat and we had some of the loins turned into Canadian bacon producing even more sausage to sell. We mostly kept all the ham we could eat and sold the picnics. We couldn't find a bit of coffee, tea or cocoa; which brings to mind Hurricane Katrina. When the Hurricane hit, TOM put a warning up on Frugal's about Folgers coffee urging everyone to stock up because Folgers had a huge processing plant in NOLA. I assume it had something to do with the research he did to write some story.

It's a long way to drive for a cup of coffee. NOLA is about 680-700 miles, ONE WAY! Plus we'd probably have to go through Memphis, a target for sure. The Jackson, Mississippi MSA is around ½ million and could have been a target too. Well, I suppose we could stay on the west side of the Mississippi River until we found an intact bridge. But, which side of the river is Folgers on?

I did some research and they have 2 locations in NOLA and both are on the north side of the river which is the opposite from which we'd be coming. And NOLA is probably hotter than a blast furnace.

Wait, that's not right, the 7/10 rule applies to New Orleans just as much as it applies to us and 3,000R/hr 2 years on should be 30mR/hr. But, there will probably be hot spots where metal and what not was irradiated and is hanging on to the radiation like its life depends on it. So, say 1,700 miles round trip including detours at 15mpg. We'll need full tanks and at least 120 gallons extra. We can get by with just the Suburban and pick up a U Haul trailer there. Maybe 12mpg hauling a load so call it 850 miles at 15mpg and 850 miles at 12mpg. That's 57 gallons down and 71 gallons back equals 128 gallons so call it 130 gallons. But 130 gallons of diesel weighs 7.15 pound per gallon and it would weigh ~930 pounds plus the containers.

Well, there's no way around it, we'll have to pull a trailer down and back. So, figure 1,700 miles at 12mpg and the fuel goes up to 142 gallons and round up to 145 gallons which is 1,037 pounds. That's less than 100 pounds difference and we'd be starting with full tanks so call it good. Now, do I take Dave or Don? Don because he's more of a hot head than Dave and I can sit on him if I have to. Now to check with the boss.

"Uh, I have a question."

"What?"

"How valuable would a can of Folgers coffee be?"

"You are not going to NOLA. And, before you ask, I'm sure the KC plant was probably nuked."

"They have a plant in KC?"

"You didn't know?"

"But TOM said to load up on Folgers because of Katrina."

"You think they only have one plant? I know about the KC plant because we saw it once."

"We?"

"Oh, not you, the girls and I saw it on a shopping trip to KC."

"So that's where you went!"

“The stores in St. Louis couldn’t get it but the store in KC had it. They called and had them hold it and the girls and I did a shopping trip. It’s less than 250 miles, you know. We made it in 3½ hours each way.”

“What were you flying, an F/A-18?”

“The Suburban and we blew the carbon out. It was a long day, 3½ hours over, 3 hours shopping and 3½ hours back.”

“Five hundred miles at 15mpg at \$4.55 per gallon? That’s \$152! I sure hope it was worth it!”

“Oh it was; it’s when I got the silk under garments from Victoria’s Secrets.”

To heck with it, we don’t need any coffee, excuse me while I pout. What silk under garments? I guess that explains where the fuel went. The Kansas City plant is located at 701 Broadway St, Kansas City, **MO**. That’s 168 miles and we’d only need the 4 cans of diesel we normally carry if we start with full tanks. And, we can even pull the empty trailer without a problem, twin tanks and 84-gallons, remember. I was keeping those 84-gallons as an emergency reserve on my trip to NOLA. One hundred-four gallons at 12mpg is almost 1,250 miles. We’ll drive the semi tractor-trailer rig and get rich in the process.

That means Dave rather than Don because Dave can handle the semi a lot better than his younger brother. I think the HK417s, the Glocks and the 11-87Ps for this trip and leave the sniper rifles at home. How far out of the way would Fort Leonard Wood be? I scoped it out on my map and it looks to be about 210 miles from Folgers to Fort Leonard Wood. Fort Leonard Wood is 65 miles from Marshfield, woo-hoo!

The trip to get a truckload of coffee and 40mm grenades is only 445 miles and we can knock that out in one long day. It is just a shame that Bigelow tea is on the east coast. Surely there must be grocery wholesalers in Kansas City, MO. Wait, we’d have to make a second trip anyway; Lake City Ammo Plant is in Kansas City, MO, double woo-hoo!!!

So the first trip we get half a load of coffee after we cleanout anything we can use from a grocery wholesaler or two. We round out that load with Folgers coffee and come back home. We drop the trailer, refill the fuel tanks and pick up another empty 53’ trailer in Springfield and load ammo from Lake City, top the front of the load with more Folgers Classic roast and head to Fort Leonard Wood for the 40mm grenades. Why stop with 40mm grenades? Why not a full assortment and look for rockets while we’re at it? TOM, eat your heart out!

Hmm, maybe we should take a cutting touch rig, just in case. Wouldn’t want to try and use explosives to get into a munitions bunker, assuming we had explosives which we don’t, yet. This PAW crap gets very complicated when you extend your reach a bit too far. All of our earlier scavenging efforts were child’s play in comparison.

“June, Dave and I will be gone the next two days but will be home each evening. We’re going for that Folgers coffee in Kansas City, MO and try to find one or two grocery wholesalers to fill in some odds and ends. I’m thinking it will be about an 8 hour day. The day after, we’re returning to Kansas City, MO for more coffee and see if we can pick up some military ammunition from the manufacturing plant. From there, we’ll divert to Fort Leonard Wood for other munitions not available in KC. The trip will be longer, perhaps as much as 10-12 hours. Don will stay home and watch your back in case anything develops.

“I would recommend loading all of the empty HK417 magazines.”

“You can’t believe we’ll have another intruder this soon.”

“He might have had friends that he confided in who know where he was coming.”

“I doubt he had a friend in the world. Ok, but two days only. Make sure you get anything we might want to have when you go to Fort Leonard Wood. Just what is you’re looking for there?”

“Grenades.”

“The next thing you know, we’ll be erecting a concrete wall around our acreage.”

“I doubt we could get the concrete for a wall or the iron pipe to build an effective gate. I do think we should raise an Observation Tower (OT); maybe wood frame construction protected by road plates.”

“Would you stop reading that darned Patriot Fiction outlining PAW survival situations?”

“It’s entertaining and educating and constitutes the majority of the fiction saved on my computer.”

“And the first time you got the stories you stayed up at night reading.”

“They are compelling.”

“I’ll make a list of things for you to look for at the grocery wholesalers.”

“Thank you.”

“You’re welcome. I’ll be in to sleep as soon as I finish that list. We don’t need a lot of different items so just get all you can on the list.”

“It would be a lot easier if we kept our food inventory on the computer.”

“You’re kidding, right? It would take a month of Sundays to inventory everything.”

“We have all winter to do it and 3 of us can work on it. Either Dave or Don can tend to the chores and keep an eye out for trouble.”

“Fine. I made fresh butter today. It’s in the tub in the refrigerator. I’ll bake bread tomorrow while you’re gone. Do you want chili for supper tomorrow night?”

“That sounds good.”

“I’ll add kidney beans to the list. Get dry if you can find them but canned will do.”

“Anything else off the top of your head?”

“Soup beans like the small white beans; let me get to work on this list so I’m not up half the night working on it.”

Her list consisted of several varieties of dry beans, pasta, sauces (non-pasta), coffee, tea in any flavor including Lipton, mayo, spices and etc. Dave and I left after an early breakfast and bathroom break. We had no trouble getting to Kansas City and the damage seemed to be centered to the west in Kansas City, KS. That didn’t make a lot of sense since the prime military target in the area was the Lake City Ammunition Plant.

We started by finding the business to business yellow pages and identified two grocery wholesalers out of many. Once there, in each case, we worked down the list. We spent more time looking for things than loading them. We also took all the coffee they had in stock, regardless of brand. The final stop was the Folgers Plant where we found their warehouse and began to load up with a forklift. When the trailers were full, we took off, south bound. When we arrived back home, there was a 3rd semi-tractor with a 53’ box trailer. One more trailer and we’d have a pair of doubles.

“Don and I went shopping. It just took replacing the fuel and a jump to get the tractor to start. As soon as it was running smoothly, we brought it home so you can use it tomorrow. The chili is ready to serve and the french loaves are still warm. Let’s eat and you can tell me about your trip.”

After we washed up and set down to eat, I filled June and Don in, “There’s not much to tell. Apparently the warhead was more to Kansas City, KS than Kansas City, MO. We found the business to business yellow pages and selected 2 wholesalers. In each case we simply went down your list. The hard part was finding the items within their warehouses. When we had what you wanted, we drove to the Folgers plant and loaded all we could pack in. By the way, we took all the coffee from the wholesalers, regardless of brand or package size.”

“I’m thinking it might be a good idea to change our plan slightly and hit 1 or 2 more wholesalers and skip Folgers until later. After, we’ll go to Lake City and located the military ammo in the calibers we use. Once we have that done we’ll head for Fort Leonard Wood.

“Fort Leonard Wood is huge and just on the short side of 100 square miles which would make it about 64,000 (62,911) acres in round numbers. We may have a little trouble locating what we’re looking for. If necessary, we’ll lie over for the night and finish our search in daylight. I told you we were looking for grenades; specifically, 40mm grenades to use in the grenade launchers on the H&K rifles. My thinking has changed slightly and I propose to locate hand grenades too. We’ll even look for those LAW rockets although I don’t know whether they have any or not. For sure, we’ll be home the night after tomorrow at the latest.

“Depending on what we find at Lake City, we may look for machineguns to use whatever belted ammo we find. I’m thinking one .50 caliber and one 7.62 caliber, with tripods. We can mount one or both in the OT if we build one. I know, I know, I’m talking about turning our acreage into an armed camp, as you’ve said. After the experience with that old coot, I’m not so sure it isn’t a good idea. Plus once we start making coffee and such available in Springfield, it will give the citizens all the more reason to try to take what we’ve accumulated.”

“So, we just don’t make the things available.”

“There’s enough coffee on the truck to last our lifetimes and probably the boys’ lifetimes. And there was much more in KC. As far as your list is concerned, we took all they had for each item listed from both wholesalers. We’re either going to have to store it in the trailers or erect a storage warehouse.”

“We only have 5 acres Jerry.”

“Less when we bring back the tankers.”

“Don and I’ll start doing that tomorrow and we should be done by the time you get home.”

“Just make sure you’re not followed.”

The following day was a repeat early on, of the day before. The semi had a full load of diesel and 10 five gallon cans stored in the sleeper. We’d added a fifth wheel dolly and were pulling doubles. June revised her list slightly and we hit the 2 previous wholesalers before turning to the 2 additional wholesalers. We located the Lake City plant and the storage warehouses. Lake City produces all ammo 20mm and smaller. We selected only the match grade rifle ammo, and a whole lot of .45acp. Next, we found the .50BMG

warehouse and the 7.62 warehouse. We took the tactical mix of .50BMG and standard mix of 7.62.

With that out of the way, we headed for the Fort. What we should have done was return to Folgers and filled the trailers to capacity and headed home. I was bound and determined to do it the way I'd outlined the previous evening. Eventually we arrived at St. Robert and entered the Fort through that gate. We parked the rig and started searching for the information about their bunker locations and contents. It got late and we called it a night without finding what we were looking for.

"Dad, it seems to me that there should be a control facility for the munitions bunkers and they should have the keys to the bunkers as well as a list of each bunker's contents."

"You're suggesting we locate the bunkers first and look for the control point next?"

"That's the logical approach. I figure most of the weapons will be stored in armories exclusive of the munitions bunkers."

"That beats what we've accomplished so far, let's do it."

"I got a Hummer started and suggest we take it. They must have had a fuel stabilizer in the JP-8."

"You drive."

I'll be damned, but his approach worked. We took an M240B with spare parts and extra barrels along with the headspacing gauges plus an M1A2 Ma Deuce with spare parts and extra barrels along with headspacing gauges. We also took a selection of 40mm grenades and hand grenades. Finally, we found the bunker with the rockets. They were the obsolete M136 AT-4 and M136 AT-4CS 84mm rockets, but any port in a storm. Weight wise, we were overloaded. I didn't really care since the weigh stations were closed. We just kept the speed down between the Fort and home.

"Don and I got all the fuel trucks and trailers moved back. We even managed to find an empty 53' box trailer. How did you guys do?"

"We returned to the same 2 wholesalers and picked up the additions to the list. Next we hit 2 more wholesalers and collected everything on the list. After that we loaded up on match grade 5.56, 7.62, .45ACP plus 9mmP. We took combat mix .50BMG and standard mix 7.62. We got to the Fort but couldn't find what we were looking for and called it a night.

"This morning Dave made a suggestion that worked out well. We got the 40mm grenades, hand grenades, an M240B with spare parts and gauges and an M2A2 with spare parts and gauges. What did you get the empty trailer for?"

“How much coffee is left in KC?”

“There is about a trailer load or more. Want us to go the day after tomorrow?”

“If you wouldn’t mind doing it, yes please. Don and I will get the lumber to build the lookout tower you want while you’re gone.”

“We’ll need those road plates to make it somewhat bulletproof.”

“We can worry about that after we get it built.”

In addition to the tripods, we’d taken pintle mounts for both machineguns. Based on something I’d read about the problems they’d had filming Rambo 4 (thanks TOM IMFDb *Trivia: Sylvester Stallone was originally going to wield the Browning M2 by hand. The gun was weighed in at +120 lbs and Sly could physically carry and fire it, but it was so cumbersome and slow that it cut down the action too much. Also firing blanks handheld is possible, firing live rounds is another matter. They decided to mount it on the back of a truck instead but the recoil was so immense that it ripped off the truck floor. They bolted the mount down on the truck frame and that is what is seen in the film.*), I’d concluded we’d need a layer of road plate beneath and above the wooden OT floor. The floor should be constructed with 4”x6” (3½”x5½”) or wider lumber.

Four inch lumber came in 4”x4” and 4”x6” and anything wider was special order. We could get 2”x12” and double or triple the thickness with more layers. Using construction grade adhesive between the planks would further strengthen the floor as would ring shanked nails. The HurriQuake would have been perfect but they only came in 2½” length.

Constructing the OT wasn’t really a big deal, in and of itself. But, there were considerations, like getting to the OT from the shelter. We solved that by building the OT over the shelter emergency egress, the ASR blast hatch. We strengthened the tower by attaching 1” road plate on all 4 sides from the ground up to the windows. The windows were multiple layers of Lexan and could be opened to use either machinegun. If I say machinegun I’m referring to the belt fed guns. If I slip and say machine gun, the reference is to the H&Ks.

We found a lot of Lexan and stored the extra for a rainy day, like if Yellowstone erupted, kind of rainy day. It was Lexan XL10 sheets 0.50” thick, 4’x8’. We had plenty and made the laminate 6 layers thick. One thing about it was that no UV would get into the interior of the OT. GE sold the rights to Lexan to the Saudis’ *SABIC Innovative Plastics*. They have 2 plants in the US.

Anyway we now have an OT, but it’s a pain in the butt to get into since it has no outside entrances. I didn’t think of it at the time and none of the other 3 brought it up. While we were collecting materials to construct the OT, we came across a substantial amount of

galvanized corrugated sheet metal and creosoted poles. After we finished the OT, we swung right into building a pole style storage building covered in galvanized corrugated sheet metal. That puppy should be standing 200 years in the future.

We first unloaded and stacked the ammunition and ordnance. That was followed by the items from the grocer wholesalers and that by the Folgers Classic Roast. Finally, we unloaded the items we considered trade goods like booze and tobacco products. June had started conducting an inventory of our food supplies and the three of us helped, 2 at a time. Someone was detailed to the OT when they weren't performing chores.

The inventory was finished up around the end of May, just in time to plant the garden. Despite what she'd said earlier, we put together the surplus fresh produce for the Farmer's Market with some Lipton tea and small cans of coffee. June said if anyone asked if we had something, we'd make a note and check it against our inventory. If we could spare it, we'd take just enough to fill that particular request.

Neither FEMA nor the Guard had come back and we returned to carrying our Glocks and HK416s or HK417s. We continued the practice of leaving one or both of the boys home *to keep an eye on the place*. We hadn't been in Springfield for more than 2 hours when we got a call on the CM-300.

"Dad, we have company."

"How many?"

"Too many."

"We'll be there in 20 minutes."

"Hurry."

We put the petal to the metal and made it in 18. Both boys were secure in the OT and had the windows open just enough to use the machineguns. That also allowed them to use the 40mm grenades. My rough count came up with 10-15 not counting the bodies on the ground.

"WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?"

"You have food, you have to share."

"MISTER THE ONLY THING I HAVE TO DO IS DIE AND PAY TAXES AND THERE'S NO GOVERNMENT AROUND TO COLLECT TAXES."

The man made a move to bring his rifle up from full ready. He didn't make it. Already having suffered several casualties, I assumed with the 4 of us they'd back off. They seemed to have other ideas, the number of available targets just doubled. It rapidly be-

came apparent that they hadn't been to Fort Leonard Wood to pick up body armor. We had a dozen sets to ensure that everyone had a set that fit (they can only lock you up once). This time we took a different approach, loading the bodies in the worst of the pickups and hauling them to Springfield.

"These people tried to invade our acreage claiming 'You have food, you have to share'. Some of you have purchased or bartered food from us in the past, including meat. As you can see, most are dead and two are wounded. You need us more than we need you, get used to it. We've been salvaging and have many things you folks can use, but none of it is free. We'll accept silver and gold coins and labor for cutting firewood.

"My wife June said last year she'd rather let the food rot in the greenhouse and garden than take anymore to Springfield. That happened after we were confronted by a man who wanted a handout and insisted. We were here earlier today selling fresh produce along with some tea and coffee."

The Dixons – Chapter 7

“You have that place southeast of Marshfield.”

“That would be us, yes.”

“But you can grow food.”

“We can, but not in quantities. We most certainly cannot feed Springfield.”

“So the wealthy eat and the poor starve?”

“The wealthy can buy food and the poor can work for it. We can pay for their labor in food if that’s what they desire.”

“Cutting firewood?”

“Yes, cutting firewood. We’ll sell the firewood to the wealthy and they, in effect, will be paying for the food the poor earned cutting firewood.”

“That’s a good idea, what’s to prevent the poor from doing it on their own?”

“Oh, nothing that I can think of, will the wealthy feed them while they work? Will the wealthy give them as much food as we will?”

“Your way or the highway?”

“It’s a free country and people can choose to do as they wish. You’re growing food here in Springfield in the commercial greenhouses. Will you take firewood for that food?”

“Absolutely not. That food is available to those who work in the greenhouses. We have a small excess that we sell.”

“To the wealthy?”

“To anyone with the means to acquire by hard cash or bartering.”

“And what do the poor have to barter if not labor?”

“Well, I don’t know, salvage maybe.”

“There’s still plenty of salvage out there, we barely scratched the surface. The longer it sits without being salvaged, the less likely it is that it will be salvageable. The coffee and tea we had earlier today were salvage. It was not acquired without risk and the risk is part of the value.”

“You have more?”

“A little. We’d be fools to tell you how much we’ve salvaged wouldn’t we? We’d be fools to tell you where we got the salvage and just as foolish to tell exactly what we salvaged. You folks can tell us what you need when we come to the Farmer’s Market and we’ll check to see if we have it and can spare some. If some of you want to work for us you’ll be fed while you’re doing the work and paid in food or silver, your choice.”

“What about the other pickups?”

“Spoils of war as are the weapons they had.”

“That’s not right.”

“They came to us to take and got taken. Life’s tough and getting tougher.”

“You’re not from around here are you?”

“St. Louis area. Bought five acres and built a vacation place.”

“Probably built a fort.”

“Not hardly; but we did build an Observation Tower after that first run in. Five acres isn’t very large when you think about it. We’ve used a fair portion of our pasture land up with various buildings. We’re looking at the adjoining five acres to buy or take over. If anyone knows who owns it, have them come see us.”

With that we left. The two wounded had been taken for treatment as soon as we revealed that not all of the people were dead. I really hope not putting them out of our misery didn’t come back to haunt us. They weren’t hurt badly enough that medical care wouldn’t restore their health. Plus both had been rather reluctant to join in the fray to begin with and perhaps, it could be argued, only did so in self-defense.

The pickups weren’t really worth much and barely ran on the old stabilized gasoline. I assumed it was stabilized with STA-BIL and not PRI-G. It was a legitimate assumption; we’d cleaned out most of the PRI products early on from the distributor and major marinas.

Their weapons were mostly hunting rifles and shotguns with a few revolvers and pistols in the mix. We’d clean them and store them against future need and ammunition acquisition. Only one was interesting and it didn’t make much sense when one thought about it. It was a SAKO TRG-42 folding stock sniper rifle in MultiCam camouflage and .338 Lapua Magnum caliber with the 27” barrel. The man had the hard case in his pickup and it contained slots for 10 10-round magazines, a flashhider and a suppressor. The rifle had backup iron sights but its primary sight was a Schmidt & Bender 5-25x56mm PM II

LP. It also had a 1:10 twist necessary for the .338 Lapua Magnum Federal Gold Medal 300gr Sierra MatchKing BTHP ammunition I had.

“This rifle is a keeper. You boys will have to decide who uses it if we get into a situation where its use is called for. I’d suggest a shooting competition with the loser using the M21.”

“I’ll concede to Don, I don’t want haul around something that heavy or a bunch of ammo that weighs what 50 rounds of .338 Lapua Magnum weighs.”

“I can handle it Dad, let Dave use the M21 if he wants.”

“Ok Don. Use those reloads the guy in Springfield did for us for practice and save the match ammo for duty use.”

“Dad, will the 1” road plate stop a 7.62x51mm bullet?”

“I don’t know. Do you want to test a piece of plate?”

“We should try the .338 while we’re at it.”

“You know that we’re going to need to duplicate the slope of the panels on the tower. The slope induces an angle of incidence and the panels have a slight increase in thickness as well as a bit of deflection. The NIJ test standards are very clear on the angle of incidence. The 7.62x51mm NATO test is on level III body armor and level IV is .30 caliber armor piercing.”

“Then we can’t test the .338?”

“We can test it, but don’t be surprised at the results. That’s not a prediction since I really don’t know whether it will penetrate or not. I’m fairly certain a .50 caliber round would penetrate, even non-armor piercing. The .50 caliber armor piercing has a capability of completely perforating 0.875” (22.2 mm) of face-hardened armor steel plate at 100 yards (91 m), and 0.75” (19 mm) at 547 yards (500 m). A common method for understanding the actual power of a cartridge is by comparing muzzle energies. The Springfield .30-06, the standard caliber for American soldiers in both World Wars and a popular caliber amongst American hunters, can produce muzzle energies between 2000 and 3000ft-lbs of energy (between 3 and 4 kilojoules). The .50 BMG round can produce between 10,000 and 15,000ft-lbs (between 14 and 18 kilojoules), depending on its powder and bullet type, as well as the rifle it was fired from.

“Due to the high ballistic coefficient of the bullet, the .50 BMG's trajectory also suffers less ‘drift’ from cross-winds than smaller and lighter calibers, making the .50 BMG a good choice for high-powered sniper rifles. Now if we were talking Mk211MP, it would be a different story since it has the power of a 20mm round. The .338 Lapua Magnum has about 4,900ft-lbs of energy so I rather doubt the match ammo will perforate the

sloped road plates. Henry Bowman used a Solothurn S-18/1000 in *Unintended Consequences*. A Finnish source gives armor penetration of the gun as 20mm at a 60° angle at 100-meter distance, decreasing to 16mm at 500 meters.”

[The rated penetration of 20mm Vulcan ammo is 12.5mm of RHA at 0° angle.]

“We don’t need to test it, you just answered my question. I just hope that no one else has a .50 caliber anything.”

“Although we didn’t look, we might have been able to find an M107 up at the Fort. Maybe they use them to train MP marksmen.”

“Would they have the Mk whatever?”

“Mk211MP. I doubt that. If anything, they’d have the M1022 rounds. They’re the non-explosive companion round. TOM doesn’t think much of the Barrett since he learned about the Tac-50. A Tac-50 was used to break Carlos Hathcock’s long distance sniping record. That record was broken by an Englishman using the .338 Lapua Magnum cartridge. His record was surpassed in early 2012, when an unknown Australian sniper recorded a kill at 2815 meters (3079 yards, 1.75 miles) using a .50 BMG M82A1.”

“You really think we could find an M82A1?”

“We won’t know until we look. Want to go back up there one of these days?”

“Well, yeah. We know where they store most of the stuff now and can pick up anything we missed.”

“We didn’t get one or more of everything?”

“We didn’t get any Claymore mines. Installing a few of those would be better than building a fort.”

“All we can do is look. We might do that the middle of next week. For the moment I think we should just stay home and tend to business.”

“Dave said he’d like to go back to the Fort and look for an M82A1.”

“Is that the Barrett sniper’s rifle?”

“It sure is.”

“Why don’t you just let him shoot that other gun, the SAKO?”

“He decided he didn’t want it and that Don could have it. Then we got to discussing some of the special purpose ammo for the .50 caliber and he got interested.”

“That Raufoss you told me about.”

“When did I tell you about that?”

“While you were talking yourself out of the Tac-50 and into the Tac-338.”

“I don’t remember doing that.”

“You were mostly muttering. My hearing is pretty good when it comes to you muttering. Went along because the ammo cost about the same and the range was about the same. Plus the rifle cost less than the Tac-50A1R2 you were looking at. So now Dave wants a Tac-50?”

“No, Dave wants a M107 aka M82A1.”

“Barrett developed a suppressor for their rifle.”

“I heard. I wonder if the military bought any.”

“Only if they’re expensive.”

“I think I heard that they cost more than the Elite Iron and Jet.”

“Then, the military probably bought some. Are you going to look for some of the special purpose ammo?”

“You know, I can’t see why they’d have any at Fort Leonard Wood. At most they’d have the M1022 companion round that shoots the same but is non-explosive.”

“If you can find any of either, bring home all you can find. After earlier today, I don’t have a good feeling about those people in Springfield. It’s too bad we can’t build a wall around the place.”

“To keep us in or them out?”

“Yep.”

“That was a multiple choice question.”

“I know and both choices apply.”

“We’ll take Don with us too.”

“Why?”

“To drive back the Suburban.”

“Smart. I’ll spend the day in the OT. I’m glad we put a chemical toilet up there. But, I think we should have considered spot lights.”

“Let’s hold off on that until we annex the adjoining 5 acres.”

“You were serious about that?”

“Well, look around. Between the fuel trucks, the outbuildings and that new storage building, our pasture is more like a dry lot than a pasture. We’re going to need more space for the livestock and the horses.”

“What horses?”

“You think the Suburban is going to last forever? They went through it when they swapped the engine and transmissions but that doesn’t mean it’s going to last forever. It’s like the diesel generators, we’re only running them when we don’t have a choice and since we doubled up the other systems, that isn’t often.”

“I never realized you were so pessimistic.”

“I didn’t used to be. I really did consider the cabin our very secure vacation cabin. We weren’t that far from good fishing and hunting during the seasons. Yes, it was also our bug out location as a last measure but I was looking forward to retiring down here when the time came.”

“And we built our own Cheyenne Mountain just in case.”

“Yes, I guess maybe we did. About the fort idea, the US used HESCO bastions in Iraq and Afghanistan. The HESCO barriers come in a variety of sizes. Most of the barriers can also be stacked, and they are shipped collapsed in compact sets. Example dimensions of typical configurations are 1.4m×1.1m×9.8m (4’6”×3’6”×32’) to 2.1m×1.5m×30m (7’×5’×100’).

“A new system of HESCO Bastion barrier developed specially for military use is deployed from a container, which is dragged along the line of ground where the barrier is to be formed, unfolding up to several hundred meters of barrier ready for filling within minutes. All we would need to fill them would be a front end loader and soil. They can be stacked 2 or 3 layers deep and topped by second layer, perhaps 2 layers deep. We’ll look for some at the Fort. That’s why we’ll need Don to drive the Suburban back while I haul the HESCOs and Dave drives the Mk19 equipped Hummer.

“We could use the same front end loader to dig a pond in the new field to supply water for the livestock. While it might be as much work as actually building a Fort with a concrete wall, it would cost less and would be something we could do ourselves. If we can get the materials without a problem from Fort Leonard Wood we should be able to get a frontend loader at the same time.”

“You’d better get a mortar while you’re at it, it will cut down the number of trips to the Fort. In fact you should get anything you can find in the way of defensive arms.”

“What’s your reasoning for suggesting that?”

“You heard the guy claim it was probably a fort. Before we’re done with this, that’s exactly what we’ll have. Then we’ll be accused of lying and who can guess what will result. I’ve got a sinking feeling in my stomach that we could end up in a full scale war with the people from Springfield because of what we’ve worked to accumulate. So, it’s better to be safe than sorry. It’s a darned shame too.”

“What’s a darned shame?”

“We have 2 boys who are getting to the age where they begin thinking about lifetime companions.”

“I doubt they’ll have problems finding wives, our having food would be a good incentive.”

“That’s cold.”

“And practical. We’ll have to be on the lookout for mobile homes.”

“You already mentioned that.”

“I did? That means it must be true. The septic system is large enough for 6 homes or 18 bedrooms. The well’s rate of flow is 40 gallons per minute. With the PV panels, wind turbines and twin battery banks we can supply the two homes of 100 amps of 240vac. All we really need is the homes with leveling stands, heat tape and skirting.”

“And more charge controller/inverters.”

“And, unfortunately those come from Springfield, if there are any left.”

“Does this call for another trip to KC?”

“Make up a grocery list and we’ll see what we can find. While we’re at it we should look for the ammo calibers we’re short of and the Folgers of course.”

Before we left for KC, we went through the business to business yellow pages, looking for and finding a solar business in KC, MO. We wanted more of the Xantrex XW6048

Hybrid Inverter Charger (6000 Watt 48 Volt DC) that we already had. There were several large sporting goods stores on both sides of the river and they had to get their guns and ammo somewhere. We finally found what we thought might be a distributor on the Missouri side. We didn't find additional grocery distributors, on the MO side and the bridge was down.

June had made a list of wanted grocery items and substitutions if the wanted item wasn't available. Any brand was acceptable. Before we set out, we discussed our options and decided to go to KC for those items and then to the Fort to see about what might be available there. We'd leave Don and the Suburban at home.

We got to the solar business without difficulty and found 8 of the units we were looking for. We took them all, with cables and accessories, and headed to the supposed ammo distributor. These people distributed more than just ammo and besides the ammo we were looking for we found Hornady 750gr A-MAX match in .50 caliber. We also found a Tac-50A1R2 with the good optics (Nightforce NXS 12-42x56mm, Mil Dot Reticule), night vision rail, MUNS, Jet suppressor and 18 extra magazines. They also stocked 250gr .338 Lapua Magnum Federal Match ammo and the Federal M118LR and the Federal Mk 262 Mod 0 5.56x45mm 77gr Open-Tipped Match/Hollow-Point Boat Tail cartridge. Mod 0 features Sierra MatchKing bullet. They also had Mk318 Mod 0 enhanced 5.56 mm ammunition 5.56x45mm 62gr Open-Tipped Match Boat Tail cartridge

We didn't do well when it came to the grocery distributors and I wasn't really surprised because we'd been thorough during the first pass. We took what substitutions we found and called it good. It was late afternoon when we finished up and Dave took over driving to the Fort.

The thing Fort Leonard Wood had going for it that put it uppermost in our minds was the fact that they trained combat engineers. Combat engineers are responsible for erecting the HESCO Bastion barriers. We assumed (rightly so) that they'd have the units on hand to train the engineering students. That was the good news; the bad news was that they had 2 of the larger assemblies and 4 of the smaller assemblies I described earlier. We couldn't find an M107 or mortars, either. We did find M1022 and Mk211MP so the trip wasn't a total loss.

And, as luck would have it we located a HMMWV with an Mk19 mounted in a CROWS II. We transferred all the available belted 40mm ammo to the trailer and had to secure it to keep it from shifting around. The trailer was more empty than not and if we hadn't gotten the last of the Folgers, would have been almost empty.

"You're back early."

"Without most of the things we were looking for. We did find 8 of the 6kw Xantrex units with accessories so we're covered on power. We also got the ammunition we were looking for along with a Tac-50A1R2 up in KC. Folgers is now out of coffee so we need to rethink how much we're going to trade off."

“You didn’t get more coffee?”

“Oh, no, I meant we cleaned them out. Most of the grocery items are substitutions.”

“Cleaned out most of what I wanted the first time?”

“Exactly. We won’t be erecting any HESCO Bastion barriers because we couldn’t find enough for our needs. Dave does have his Hummer and Mk19 mounted in a CROWS II. All we found for ammo for it was the M430A1 HEDP. We did find M1022 and Mk211MP for the Tac-50 along with 750gr Hornady A-MAX match and 250gr .338 Lapua Magnum Federal Match.”

“For that SAKO rifle?”

“That was my thinking at the time. The rifling of the SAKO will permit the 300gr ammo but I’d prefer keeping our 300gr for the Tac-338. I have thought about switching the scopes. The only Claymore mines we found were the blue training units. Dave brought those up as an alternative for the barriers. The only other thing we found in KC was a large quantity of match grade 5.56×45mm ammo, Mk 262 and Mk318 which are both hollow point boat tail match cartridges we can shoot in the HK416s or SR-556s.”

“If we’re not going to erect the barrier, what’s your alternative?”

“At the moment, I don’t have one. I’m open to suggestions.”

“Don and I went into Springfield today.”

What for?”

“To get a 4th trailer with a fifth wheel dolly and a turkey for Thursday. We were able to trade some of the excess for the fixings for Thanksgiving Dinner.”

“Ok, what excess?”

“Some coffee, tea and cocoa for the miscellaneous items we needed and a ham for a turkey. I just had a craving for a traditional Thanksgiving dinner.”

“Not too much to give thanks for.”

“We’re alive; we have food supplies for a few years and certainly enough for the next 3 years even if we couldn’t grow any food. We have enough trade goods to keep us in food for several more years before we’d need to turn to the silver and gold. We might not have the barrier you wanted but we have weapons and ammo out the gizo. We can pull that Mk19 from Hummer and mount in the OT and no one can get within 1,400 meters.”

“But June, we have rifles that can shoot almost 3,000 meters. If we have them, there’s no reason to believe that others don’t.”

“They have one less now, thanks to the shootout.”

The Dixons – Chapter 8

When no one showed up claiming ownership to the adjoining 5 acres, we claimed it. After, we got to looking at the fences and there were 3 5-acre fields, fenced separately with connecting gates. We assumed that whoever owned one, owned all three and that gave us a block of 20 acres that were actually square, $\sim 933\frac{1}{3}'$ per side or ~ 56.5 rods.

As we examined the full acreage, it became obvious where the gates between our 5 and the other 5 acre fields had been since the reinforcements typically found at gate entrances hadn't been removed, merely fenced over. We made a note to add 2 gates to our shopping list. Each of the 5 acre plots had a well drilled with an electric well pump, but no power. The pumps were 2 wire, 230vac, 60hz, $1\frac{1}{2}$ hp Sta-Rite 4", 50gpm 4 stage pumps, the same as ours.

The solar place had wind turbines and PV panels that we hadn't taken, for want of need. Now was different, we needed them and the weather was too bad to make the trip back to KC. There was a booklet in a double layer of Ziploc bags attached to each well pipe and we took one to read. The booklet was a complete owner's manual for the submersible pump, which, among other things, outlined the power requirements. We could use 14AWG, if we must, 12AWG was preferred and 10AWG was slight overkill. Would we need to tweak the AC power to 230vac?

That was a simple adjustment to the inverters, easily accomplished. The real question was it needed? Have you checked an outlet to determine if you're getting 110, 115 or 120 volts? The odds are that were you connected to commercial power, you be getting ~ 120 vac at ~ 60 hz. Appliances rated at 110 and 115 will run just fine on 120. Alternating current voltage is measured in Root Mean Square. I think I read that in one of TOM's stories. He was an electronics [instrumentation] technician in the Air Force, if I recall correctly. Ten gauge is rated at 30 amps, 12 gauge at 25 amps and 14 gauge at 20 amps.

We discussed what to do about the power for the well pumps and decided a battery bank at each well rated at 48vdc, 6 Surrrette 820a/h AGM gel-cell 8 volt batteries for each well. They would be installed in a battery rack in a small pre fab shed that we could add a heater to after insulating it. We'd add 7 batteries (1 spare per well), a battery rack, cables and a salvaged XW6048 Hybrid Inverter Charger. The backup system to the PV panels would include a 20kw wind turbine and a small radio transceiver to transmit to the power net plus an Onan QD 12.5 and fuel tanks, one for each well.

One of the features of Xantrex XW6048 Hybrid Inverter Charger that made it so attractive was the accessories. They included the XW AGS Xanbus-enabled device that can automatically activate a generator to provide an XW Series Inverter/Charger with power to recharge depleted batteries or assist with heavy loads; also, The XW Power Distribution Panel with conduit box is factory-wired and labeled to support a code-compliant single-inverter installation which accommodates both AC and DC breakers and wiring for three XW Hybrid Inverter/Chargers and four XW Solar Charge Controllers; the XW

SCP is a Xanbus-enabled device featuring a graphical, backlit LCD screen that displays system configuration and diagnostic information for all devices connected to the network; the Xantrex XW Solar Charge Controller (XW SCC) is a photovoltaic (PV) charge controller that tracks the electrical maximum power point of a PV array to deliver the maximum available current for charging batteries; and the XW Conduit Box mounts directly to the bottom of an inverter/charger to safely protect end-users from inadvertent contact with wiring or connections for additional inverters; and, the XW Sq-D 60A QOU Breaker.

That solar business had been off the beaten path in a commercial district, so we suspected that everything we had left behind earlier was likely still there. While we'd taken a 2nd wind turbine, they had more of the smaller 20kw units. The only things we'd cleaned out were 24 submarine batteries and a portion of the PV panels. The Surrrette batteries had the battery acid installed and there were several more dry batteries plus containers of battery acid. Eventually we went back.

We took everything we could load into the back of the 53' cargo trailer, including a complete line of the 6048 accessories. We had the instruction manual and owner's manual and whatever time it would take to make the 3 installations. We got the 3 Onan QD 12.5 generators from an RV dealer/repair shop. Fortunately he had a large inventory of filters and repair parts and a mechanic's guide for repairing the engine and alternator. We perused his shop records and selected repair parts based on those most commonly used but made sure we could completely rebuild the engine and alternator of all 3 of the generators.

I've always wondered why they were called generators when they were diesel driven alternators. We picked up 3 prefab sheds on our way out of KC. When we passed a feed and grain, we stopped and loaded a dozen large bags grass seed.

On the way back home, Dave and I got engrossed in a discussion of security. The range of the motion detectors was about 150' without the repeaters. We hashed it around for a while and decided to keep our existing system and move the livestock back to the home place every evening.

Placing the sheds near the wells was easy as was installing a battery rack. Since the batteries went over 400 pounds each, wet, it called for a bunch of hard labor. We next installed the Xantrex equipment following the installation manual carefully. After that, we installed the PV panels to get a charge started on the batteries. Next, we installed the QD 12.5 and substitute fuel tanks we found, 1,100-gallon propane tanks (as diesel tanks), and finally the wind turbine.

When it was installed and checked out, we moved to the 2nd of 3 wells and repeated the process which went quickly compared to the first installation. The 3rd and final installation took about the same time as the 2nd, completing that project. With spring coming on, we seeded the 3 fields and set up watering troughs and feed troughs.

We had hay, straw and feed but not much feed. Each species of livestock required a slightly different ration. Rather than going back to Springfield, we headed northeast, looking for grain elevators. We eventually found what we were looking for in Lebanon, and for a 2nd time had to fork over gold and silver coins. We bought 2 grain trucks of feed and they'd deliver, for a fee.

The seller suggested forming a rectangular frame of a sort using the straw and hay bales and lining it with plastic. We had the plastic we had intended to use for the greenhouse and Dave, Don and I stacked the bales on the 2 long and 1 short side and laid down the plastic lining. The next day they delivered the first load of feed and went back for the 2nd. We'd overbuilt the frame so I asked if they would sell us more feed.

The drivers said up to 3 additional loads, COD. Gold was about \$2,500 an ounce and a load was 5 tons, one ounce of gold. The last 3 loads filled the frame and we had all the feed we'd need for the mid-term future. We installed the 2 gates and we were ready to collapse. We didn't get the chance due to unseen circumstances.

"Dad, traffic on the road."

"Where is it headed?"

"They're coming here."

"Lock and load." I'd always wanted to say that since I'd started reading TOM's stories. "How many people?"

"Three. They're driving an unarmed Hummer."

The military back again? It was 3 people from Springfield. They wanted a parley.

"What can we do for you?"

"Give us the courtesy of listening to a proposal. Whether you agree, disagree or need time to think it over, we won't hang around. We're sort of coming to you hat in hand and while we're armed, we can disarm if you so choose."

"I think not... I like your audacity."

"Would you care for some coffee and a cinnamon roll?"

Was that June who just invited them to see the inside of our cabin? The lady who'd rather see the food rot in the greenhouse and garden than take anymore to Springfield? I'll be damned.

"I do miss my coffee and these cinnamon rolls are very good."

“Thank you.”

“I don’t mean to be short... but what is it you want?”

“You services. As you pointed out you’ve been salvaging and scavenging from the time it was safe to leave your shelter. My brother in law delivered concrete so I know about your shelter. My family has one we got from Utah Shelter Systems. It was cramped to say the least.

“What we’re proposing is that you salvage things we need. We’ll provide diesel fuel that’s been restored with some PRI-D we finally located. Someone cleaned out the distributor and large marinas down at Table Rock Lake.”

I smiled inwardly at his statement... if they only knew.

“If you can make one of the 3 additional 5 acre fields available, we’ll provide the seeds and labor for a garden. We have a list of things we need including canning jars, lids and so forth. Some of the trips would involve interstate trips, like Hyrum and Orem, Utah. If it works out, perhaps even Montpelier, Idaho.”

“The places that sell LTS foods and Canning Pantry?”

“Exactly. One of the things we can offer in payment is additional livestock, including saddle/harness horses. Morgans to be exact. That will include new tack, saddles bridles, halters, saddlebags, pommel bags, rifle scabbards, etc. We can also pay in gold but only to a very limited extent.”

“Buggies or horse drawn wagons?”

“We have buggies. We’re making tongues to convert regular pneumatic tire wagons to horse drawn.”

“Excuse me for saying so, but your request doesn’t make a lot of sense. Why not do the salvaging on your own?”

“The overall consensus in Springfield is that it’s stealing. We’re only talking about clearly abandoned property but the majority didn’t see it that way.”

“But they’re willing to buy this so called stolen property?”

“It doesn’t make a lot of sense does it?”

“Not at all. Ok, we’ll take your proposal under consideration. If we accept, my 2 boys and I will do the salvaging and you folks will provide a security force for our property. Don’t be messing with June, she can shoot the eye out of a bumble bee at 100 yards and is always armed.”

“We’ll send a mix of Deputies and local Policeman. Say, you wouldn’t know anything about an arms shipment for the local SWAT unit would you?”

“We only took 4 of each.”

“I guess the early bird gets the worm, so to speak.”

“We did. What really surprised me was that everyone stayed sheltered. In all the tales written about a PAW people seem to leave shelters too early.”

“Excuse me, PAW?”

“Post-Apocalyptic World.”

“We had limited shelter space that was quickly organized with the first announcement. The shelter Captains were instructed to remain locked down until the all clear was given by the people with the radiation instruments.”

“So, who or what are you, the Mayor?”

“Shall we say a prominent citizen with some influence?”

“Whatever. We’ll talk it over and let you know within a couple or 3 days.”

“Then, we’d better be going. Thank you for listening and the coffee and cinnamon rolls.”

“What do you think?”

“I don’t trust them Jerry.”

“Dave?”

“It would be a way to earn an income.”

“Don?”

“I like driving the big rigs.”

“It could be very dangerous. I half suspect that some of those people who think it is stealing are simply afraid. Dave is right, though, it would be a way to earn a living. We need 3 tractors and 6 53’ cargo trailers, especially for those long distance trips. They offered Morgans and that’s an expensive horse, most of the time. I was thinking a stallion, 4 mares and 4 geldings with tack for all 9 and rifle scabbards for our Winchester rifles. We can get more Ruger’s so we might think about pommel bags with holsters like

Cowboy had. That was Jerry's story and he favored the Rogue River hat. I have a picture of that hat I found way back when on the internet."



"That's nothing but a fedora with a leather hatband and chinstrap."

"True, it wasn't what I had initially pictured."

"I wonder if that's like the hat that Jack wore in *Expedition*."

"Sandusky's hat was leather, not felt. He wore a Panama when they got to Brazil."

"Probably a really expensive Panama, like the Montecristi."

"What do you know about Panama hats Don?"

"Looked them up when I read the story. Montecristi makes the finest hats, grade 23-25. The higher the number, the finer the weave and the more they cost."

"Do you want a hat like that?"

"I think I'd rather have a Stetson."

"If you find one you like, take it. We aren't going to look for hats anytime soon."

"Why not, we're getting horses?"

"Maybe, maybe not. Don't count your horses until..."

“They hatch?”

“I was going to say until you have one and have learned to ride. Horses aren’t chickens.”

“So are we or aren’t we?”

“What? Oh, do the salvaging. Sorry got sidetracked for a minute. I’m willing and so are the boys. You should be well looked after out here with the Deputies and Police. Maybe you can get one of their wives to help you with garden and greenhouse. One of the men from town will be here to take care of the livestock or it’s no deal. With 318’ of trailer space, 2 or 3 trips should pretty well take care of Montpelier, Hyrum and Orem. I think there is one more in the Orem area, Nitro-Pak is in Heber City, Utah so it could take 4 trips.”

“What does Nitro-Pak have?”

“They carry Mountain House plus other product lines, including some exclusives if I recall correctly.”

“Try and find a grocery warehouse and get the things you had to substitute the last time you went up to KC.”

“I don’t remember what happened to the list, could you make another?”

“You bet, but it will be longer.”

“You know the radiation should have fallen significantly in Oklahoma so that might be the perfect place to look.”

“Don’t go looking for trouble.”

“I’m serious. They either hit Tulsa or Oklahoma City. Whichever they hit got a high dose of radiation, 3,000R/hr and would have been uninhabitable until recently, assuming it is now. We can risk a little exposure to get some of the things we really need although I believe it will be limited to dry goods that freezing wouldn’t hurt.”

“Beans, rice, oatmeal, coffee, tea and things like that?”

“That is what I had in mind.”

“We could use more hard red and durum wheat if you can find it. Our Country Living Grain Mill is rapidly becoming a Country Dying Grain Mill. See if you can find the one Jerry recommends, the Diamant 525.”

“Fat chance of getting one of those. The only company I know that carries that grain mill is Lehman’s. They’re imported from Poland and they’re out of stock more often than in stock. Lehman’s Hardware is located the other direction, back east in Dalton, Ohio. That sounds like some burg and the business probably isn’t in Dalton. Canning pantry carries the Country Living Grain Mill and sells repair kits. How about I pick up a repair kit for our mill and a couple more just in case?”

“I guess. Does Canning Pantry carry meat slicers and grinders?”

“You want commercial models? We might just as well, the price is right.”

“A large slicer and large grinder with a sausage stuffer, if they have it. They carry those Mrs. Wages pickle mixes and tomato mixes so you might as get all you can find. We have 2 30 quart All American pressure canners but they make one size larger so get 2 of those if they have them in stock.”

“Anything else?”

“Give me a minute, I’m running through what I can remember of the products they carry. Ok, check for a commercial food processor, a dehydrator and a heavy duty blender.”

“Anything else? Smokehouse? A juicer?”

“Sure why not, get both. Get Lecithin, Gluten and that dough enhancer they carry. On the subject of bread, get some of those 1½ pound loaf pans if they have them. It’s a real pain in the butt making the tomato sauce and I seem to recall that they had a strainer and sauce maker so you should check on that. If you find them, get 4 and some large stock pots to reduce the sauce. And, whatever you do, don’t forget the jars and cases of extra lids.”

“Can you remember that long enough to put together a list? Oh, don’t forget the grocery list either. I think we’ll start at Montpelier and work our way south. We can stop in Salt Lake City and pick up a Book of Mormon if you want one.”

“I’ve nothing against the Mormons but feel free to skip that stop.”

“If the city wasn’t nuked, it might be a good source for medical supplies.”

“And Mormons. No thank you.”

We belonged to the United Methodist Church. They don’t get too excited if you only show up on Easter, or not.

I occurred to me that Rainy Day Foods seemed to carry many things in bulk plus those 6 gallon pails. It would be a sure source for grains if someone hadn’t already cleaned the place out. And, we could get bulk cocoa products as well. They wouldn’t have coffee

or tea but we weren't short on either, just particular flavors of tea. June liked Earl Grey; I tried it and it tasted like mud.

"Ok, we'll go into Springfield tomorrow and work out the details. We're taking all of the risk, so I've decided it will be my way or the highway. We need to carry fuel with us so we need to round up several 55-gallon drums. The horses will be delivered before we leave. My thinking is to take the HK416s and HK417s with our Glocks and shotguns. I have no intention of getting into a situation where we'll need the large caliber rifles, but I think we should take them anyway, just in case."

"What about the trailers?"

"That will be up to them. I plan to insist that the tractors and trailers are in perfect working order before we leave. We'll supply our own fuel since we probably have more than they do and ours has been stabilized since we collected it right after the war. While I'm inclined to believe what TOM claims about PRI products, we don't really know the condition the fuel they collected was in before they found the PRI-D. Questions or comments?"

"Let's do it."

"Tomorrow; your mother is working on some shopping lists. I hope we have room in the storage building for what she wants us to get for our use. It might be a good time to clean our firearms and select the ammo we're taking. Make sure all of the rifle ammo is match grade, we have more than enough. I'm going to install a hasp and padlock on the storage building and will join you later to clean my weapons."

As I was to learn later, Don had his own idea about the ammo for that SAKO TRG-42. Since it had 1:10 and could shoot the 300gr Federal match ammo, he selected that over the 250gr Federal match ammo. Had I known, we'd have had words. It turned out that sometimes the child is smarter than the parent. Dave had a full assortment for the Tac-50 including the Hornady, M1022 and Mk211MP. His decision was even better than his brother's. I didn't really expect much trouble this long after the war; boy was I wrong.

"Have you reached a decision?"

"We have. We'll need 4 semi tractors in good repair and 8 53' cargo trailers with new tires and brakes plus all hoses checked and replaced as necessary. We will be pulling double trailers so 4 of the trailers need 5th wheel dollies or whatever it takes. We will supply our own fuel. We have 2 semis and 4 53' trailers we'll need brought into good repair while we're gone. A portion of what we collect will be for our own use with the balance going to the citizens of Springfield. That will be in lieu of trading or whatever you planned. We want 9 Morgan horses; a stallion, 4 mares and 4 geldings, before we leave. You should arrange for another stallion to breed any fillies the mares produced to

maintain good bloodlines. You can deliver the buggies and wagons as they become available.

“We require 24/7 security for our place as described with either Deputies or Springfield Police. We also need someone to tend to our livestock on an ongoing basis. My wife June would appreciate a hand with our garden and greenhouse. You can use either or both of the back 5 acre fields. Each has a well with power provided individually and stock tanks with float switches. I’d appreciate if someone would check them daily to ensure they’re working as they should.

“You mentioned rifle scabbards and our saddle rifles are Winchester models 1886 and 1892. The pommel bags should have holsters for Ruger Blackhawks with 5½” barrels. We will supply our own firearms. Are these terms agreeable or is the deal off?”

“You presume much.”

“We’re taking the risk and you’re actually getting more than you asked for. And, so there is no misunderstanding, it’s a one-time offer and it will be my way or the highway. If you choose to do your own salvaging we won’t interfere. We plan to leave tomorrow if you agree, the conditions are met and we have the horses and livestock.”

“Livestock?”

“You said and I quote, ‘One of the things we can offer in payment is additional livestock, including saddle/harness horses. Morgans to be exact. That will include new tack, saddles bridles, halters, saddlebags, pommel bags, rifle scabbards, etc. We can also pay in gold but only to a very limited extent.’ I assume the other livestock is swine and cattle. We would prefer Black Angus if available because they both good beef cattle and dairy cattle. We don’t require a bull, just the breeding services of an unrelated Black Angus bull.”

“No chickens?”

“One hundred-twenty layers, if available, would be nice. It would give us eggs and meat to sell.”

“Agreed. We’ll need an extra day to see to the vehicles and deliver the livestock. Do we need our own tractor, plow and harrows?”

“We don’t have them, sorry.”

“We do, it’s not a problem. Do you want us to turn your garden spot?”

“It’s already done; we have a Troy-bilt, but thanks for offering.”

They showed up the next morning with 4 Black Angus cows, already bred. There were 3 sows and a boar, but the sows had also been bred. The stallion was 6 years old and proven. The mares were with foal from another stallion. The pullets would come later. We were told that the trucks were being worked on and would be delivered to our acreage so we could fill the tanks and arrange for the fuel the next morning.

“I plumb forgot. We need 30 55-gallon drums to haul fuel in. Can you bring them with the tractors and trailers tomorrow?”

“I wondered about that. We gathered 36, if you want them.”

“Perfect, thank you. One other thing. We might need more storage space. Could you folks build another pole building for us if we need it for storage?”

“I think that might be arranged.”

“Might?”

“If you need it, we’ll build it.”

The Dixons – Chapter 9

It was almost an invasion when they pulled in the next morning. They had the 4 tractors and 8 cargo trailers. There were 12 empty 55-gallon drums in the rear of three of the front trailers. The fuel tanks were nearly empty so they'd obviously taken us at our word. They also had a John Deere tractor with a 3 bottom plow and a tilt bed truck with the disk and drag harrow. There were 2 Springfield Policemen and 2 Greene County Deputies. The wives of the 2 Deputies introduced themselves to June and the 3 of them headed to the greenhouse.

We dropped the rear trailers and pulled the first rig up to the diesel tank. It had moderately large saddle tanks and I wondered if the farm tank contained enough diesel fuel. A quick bit of math and I knew the diesel tank wasn't the solution so we moved over to one of the tankers. Fifty-five times 36 = 1,980 gallons and I then wondered if we were hauling too much fuel. There was also the question of length, twin 53' trailers were allowed in Canada but not the US, as one of the Deputies pointed out.

The tractors were identical Mack Axle Back Pinnacle Flat Top Sleepers with twin 72 gallon fuel tanks. That's 144 gallons at 5.5mpg or ~792 miles, call it 800. I was guessing at the mpg and every 0.1 difference changed the total mileage by 14.4. I concluded we'd better haul the fuel because one never knew how many detours there would be between Springfield and Montpelier. You know the old saw; would you rather have it and not need it or need it and not have it? On the other hand 55-gallon drums of diesel weigh about 400 pounds times 12 is 2½ tons plus the weight of the drums.

While I was busy worrying about the fuel and what not, Dave and Don loaded their weapons into the cabs of the trucks. I filled the twin tanks almost to the cap and started filling the drums. Since the tanker was full and the fuel drained out the bottom and the top of the tanker was higher than the top of the drums, it worked out just fine. When I had the drums full and the bungs back in, I pulled ahead to let Dave have his turn. While I secured the drums, Don loaded my weapons into the cab of my truck.

I secured the 6 drums on the right side and then the left side near the rear doors. Then I went to the cabin and got the box of food and a 5 gallon water jug. The boys had already done the same. Finally, I grabbed my duffel bag of clean clothes and shaving kit and put them in the sleeper compartment. Staying clean would be catch as can. (June had included several packages of Assurance personal washcloths.) They drove our 2 double rigs back to Springfield.

We departed just after lunch and a bathroom break. With the boys help, we'd plotted a course using a mix of major highways and interstates due to the B train nature of our rigs. Dave had included a crank type pump that could be fitted to the bung of the fuel drum and deliver 1 gallon of fuel per 3 revolutions of the crank. He also included Blitz 5-gallon gas cans and a large galvanized funnel, bless his pea pickin' heart. Not that it wasn't a lot of work refueling.

When we stopped for our first break, I was brought up to speed on the refueling process and informed of some of their other choices. They included a fair share of our camping gear and the 5 5-gallon propane tanks and an older one-piece propane tree with 3 outlets, fold up picnic table with benches and 4 lawn chairs. They brought both propane stoves, the oversized Coleman units. Hell, they even included 3 tent safe Black Cat Portable Catalytic Heaters and Coleman pots and pans, flatware, dishes and a nondescript multipurpose basin. They had the coolers with the refrigerated food while my box contained the side dishes. I thought it had been awfully light.

We stopped at sunset and set up our camp in a rest area. Before it was fully dark, the kitchen was set up, the heaters warming the sleepers, the inflatable mattresses inflated and sleeping bags laid out. Dinner was Mountain house beef stew with large portions from a no. 10 can. Breakfast would be bacon, eggs and hash browns with toast and coffee. Lunch would be prepared before we left, ham sandwiches and coffee from one of the Stanley ½ gallon thermos bottles or lemonade from another. Each had brought 5-gallons of water, as had I.

During the early morning the following day, we came upon Grand Island, Nebraska. After a quick exchange of radio calls on the Motorola's, we exited to go shopping. Hornady is located in Grand Island. Can't say we found enough, but it went into my 2nd trailer. It was about ¼ trailer load.

We'd bypassed Kansas City and Omaha, joining I-80 at Lincoln. After our stop in Grand Island, we resumed our journey on I-80 west. As we approached the Nebraska-Wyoming border, the needle began to raise some on the CD V-715. We stopped and refueled, intent on making a mad dash through Cheyenne. Cheyenne was hot, but not all that hot. We didn't stay there long enough to really take careful readings. We stopped for the night west of Laramie.

With good luck, the following day would see us setting up camp at Rainy Day Foods (aka Walton Feed). It had been clouding up during the afternoon and we barely got supper done and cleaned up before we were hit with a deluge of cold hard rain with sleet. We gathered in my sleeper to discuss our plans for the next day.

"If I'm reading the map right, we follow I-80 to west of Little America where I-80 turns south to Salt Lake City. We'll take US 30 from there to Montpelier."

"We both checked and got the same result."

"Assuming we can fill all 6 trailers, we'll refuel and turn tail for home. I think we'll have better luck on finding a grocery wholesaler on our second or third trip. The second trip, we'll get anything we left behind at Montpelier, if any, with the primary destination being Canning Pantry in Hyrum. In every case, we need to fill the trailers to their physical capacities. We'll only load to less than physical capacity when the trailers begin squatting on their tires since we don't have to worry about weigh stations. But, except for the mad

minutes it takes to get through Cheyenne, we'll keep our speed down to preserve fuel and keep the mileage reasonable."

"It was smart putting the CM-300s in the semis and carrying the CP-200s."

"We could have used the existing CBs, of course, but everyone and his brother probably still has an old CB around somewhere. Plus we have 32 channels on the mobiles and 16 on the portables. I think we should use the channel number corresponding to the date and start over on the 17th. That will reserve the upper 16 channels for tractor to tractor comms. All you have to say is *switch-date* and we will move to the appropriate channel."

"Is this really necessary?"

"I'm not sure Dave, but what will it hurt? Would you two like a snort before we turn in?"

"Snort?"

"A taste of Jack Daniel's Single Barrel."

"We don't mind if we do, thank you."

"You've grown up too fast to suit my tastes, but you're men now, not boys, and should be treated as such."

"Mom would strangle you."

"Yeah, probably. Sorry, no ice but I have disposable plastic glasses."

"Give me the glasses; I'll get the ice and some club soda to cut mine."

"Me too."

"I just need the glass and ice."

When Don returned, I poured about 1½oz of the fine whiskey meant to be taken neat, and they added ice and topped it off with club soda. My glass probably had 3oz of whiskey.

"Whiskey and soda, not half bad."

"Single Barrel is intended to be taken neat or on the rocks. I have Jack Black and Gentleman Jack at home for mixed drinks."

"Oh well, I didn't know."

“Yeah and I could have just brought Jack Black. No problem. I’d suggest Jack Black at home for mixed drinks. One of the more popular mixers among a certain crowd is Jack and Coke or Jim Beam and Coke. I didn’t get much bourbon because I prefer Tennessee sippin’ whiskey. It’s technically bourbon anyway, according to the law.”

“What do you like best?”

“Do you remember TOM’s list of favorites?”

“Yes, why?”

“Me too, I guess.”

“But he had several different lists. Did he ever say what he drank?”

“Primarily, Jack Black and Squirt. Ok, Jack Daniels Single Barrel, Cuervo 1800, Bombay Sapphire Gin, 25 year old Chivas Regal, Absolute Vodka, Myers Rum, Crown Royal, Maker’s Mark and a very good Cognac. Liqueurs including Anisette, Bénédictine, B&B, Bailey’s Irish Crème, Crème de Menthe, Crème de Cacao, Cherry Heering, Curaçao, Cointreau, Drambuie, Grand Mariner, Galliano, Frangelico, Irish Mist, Kahlúa, Tia Maria and Ouzo.

“Second rate liquor would be Gentleman Jack, Jose Cuervo, Beefeaters Gin, 12 year old Chivas Regal, any decent vodka, Bacardi Rum, any decent Canadian Whiskey, Jim Beam and a lesser Cognac or Brandy. Third rate would be Jack Black, Jose Cuervo, Gordon’s Gin, a cheap vodka and scotch, Bacardi Rum, any decent Canadian Whiskey, bourbons other than Jim Beam and a domestic Brandy.

“Mixers would include Squirt, Coke, Seven up, Ginger Ale, Schweppes including tonic water, Collins mix, Margarita mix, sweet and dry vermouth, more of the former than latter.

“Wines would include Port, Crème Sherry, Madeira, Masala, Merlot, Chardonnay, Chablis, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Noir, and anything that looks good on the shelf. The premiums for home use, the mid line for entertaining and trading and the 3rd level for trading.”

“How much of that do we have?”

“A 53’ trailer load. I plan to go back to KC with our 3 rigs and empty the places and get the mixers from the grocery warehouses.”

“Will they still be good?”

“As long as they aren’t diet and haven’t frozen, yes.”

“What about tobacco?”

“That too. People have their vices and sometimes a drink or a smoke is as important as putting food on the table. By the time we’re done with KC, we might need to rent a warehouse in Springfield.”

“It might be better to get the materials and build a second storage building.”

“We’d have to take over the 20 acres on the other side of our place.”

“Twenty acres, forty acres, so what? There really isn’t much more useable land than that until we get the timber harvested and the ground leveled a little. Oh, that’s why you wanted people to cut timber, isn’t it? We don’t really burn that much in the fireplace.”

“I can’t say that the thought didn’t pass through my mind. Look, I never intended to do more than survive in the case we found ourselves in a PAW. However, since the opportunity has been presented, I am not opposed to accumulating all we can in terms of survival supplies and funds if it comes to that. It’s said that wealth can’t buy happiness... but it sure beats whatever is in second place.”

“I thought it was money...”

“What is money worth now? Wealth can be measured in the material possessions it will require to survive and succeed in this PAW. It’s bedtime. Tomorrow will come early.”

It was very late in the day when we arrived at the ghost town named Montpelier. Montpelier is a city in Bear Lake County, Idaho. The city is the largest community in the Bear Lake Valley, a farming region north of Bear Lake in southeastern Idaho along the Utah border. It was settled in 1863 by Mormon pioneers on the route of the Oregon Trail. Like most western towns, the name has been changed numerous times.

First it was known as Clover Creek by Oregon Trail travelers, later it became Belmont and finally was given the name Montpelier by Brigham Young, one of the founding fathers of Mormonism, after a town in his birth state of Vermont. The city was first settled in 1864. As of the census of 2000, there were 2,785 people, 1,012 households, and 715 families residing in the city. The population density was 1,512.3 people per square mile. There were 1,171 housing units at an average density of 635.9 per square mile.

Additional demographics don’t really matter because they no longer apply. The residents had left. We set up camp rather than occupying a home or building due the strangeness of what we found. Rainy Day Foods was located at 135 North 10th Street. Walton hadn’t changed its name; Rainy Day Foods was a division. It was obvious that the residents had taken more than enough food and supplies to get them to wherever they went.

The next morning we dropped the 3 rear trailers and in my case, the first trailer. I hooked my second trailer to my rig and off we went, backing the trucks up to the loading dock one at a time, starting with mine. When my trailer was half filled with the ammo and pails, we switched to Dave's and filled it to physical capacity. When one was filled, it would be moved and another backed up. We took everything that wasn't nailed down, period. Food, pails, lids... you name it. However, the gaps in the carefully organized products revealed that before leaving, the survivors had taken a selection of the products. The Mountain House foods were non-existent. Many of the Super Pails were missing but not so Regular Pails.

It didn't matter. What wasn't on pallets was soon on pallets and wrapped with that plastic film they use to secure the contents of the pallet. The pallets of pails went on the bottom layer, medium weight boxes made up the second layer of pallets and very light weight boxes the top layer. We were careful to not make the top too high because we had to clear the roof. We filled the Dave's trailer and pulled it aside. Dave went after his 2nd trailer and had it standing by.

We filled the second and third trailer by quitting time. That is to say, we quit after the third trailer was filled. There wasn't much left and Dave's second trailer was backed up to the loading dock. There was ample room in the nearly empty warehouse so we camped inside. After supper, I pulled out a six-pack of homebrew I'd traded for in Springfield with a 13oz can of Folgers.

"Springfield?" Dave asked.

"Yep, 13oz can of Folgers."

"Yuk, he got the better of the deal."

"It may taste like crap but he said it went 8% by his hydrometer. At relatively low abv, the alcohol percentage by weight is about 4/5 of the abv, ergo, 3.2% abw is equivalent to 4.0% abv. However, because of the miscibility of alcohol and water, the conversion factor is not constant but rather depends upon the concentration of alcohol. 100% abw, of course, is equivalent to 100% abv. Many brewers use the formula $ABV = (Starting\ SG - Final\ SG) \times 131$.

"What scale did he use?"

"He didn't say. I would assume abv."

"I think I'll save my second for another night."

"Me too."

It sure wasn't Budweiser or Coors or PBR; but for homebrew it wasn't THAT bad. We'd find someone in Springfield who put out a GOOD brew and stick with him or her. I fully

intended to return to KC and mine the area for alcoholic beverages, excluding beer. At most the commercial products were good for about 4 months. For many years my favorite was Carling Black Label which was bottled in the US by the Brewing Corporation of America, later Carling-National. Carling-National was bought out by the G. Heileman Brewing Co. due to pressure from Miller and Anheuser-Busch on Carling. It's not bottled in the US now and ownership of the rights, etc. is held by Pabst Brewing Company of Los Angeles.

When we finished we had 1 empty trailer and 2 ½ empty trailers. The closest destination was Hyrum, Utah, down 89. We discussed it and decided to go there for the odds and ends to fill my ½ empty trailer and the 1½ trailers with the Mason jars. We'd look for Country Living Grain Mills and repair kits; a large slicer and large grinder with a sausage stuffer; Mrs. Wages pickle mixes and tomato mixes; several 41.5 quart All American pressure canners; a commercial food processor, a dehydrator and a heavy duty blender; a smokehouse and a juicer; lecithin, gluten and dough enhancer; 1½ pound loaf pans; 4 strainers and sauce makers; large stock pots; Lids and Mason jars.

I was sure we could fit everything, including cases of extra lids in my ½ full trailer. That meant we could get a 1½ 53' trailer loads of jars, stacked, not on pallets. We could unload the jars hand-to-hand fashion, 2-3 cases at a time.

It turned out to be less than 80 miles to Hyrum and the only large city we came upon was Logan, Utah. It was on the other side of the mountains and we were forced to keep our speed down through the mountains, taking 2½ hours to get to Hyrum. We got a lot of surprised/strange looks passing through Logan, a smile or wave generated a smile or wave back.

Hyrum is a city in Cache County, Utah. The population was 7,609 at the 2010 census. It is included in the Logan, Utah–Idaho (partial) Metropolitan Statistical Area. As of the census of 2000, there are 6,316 people, 1,683 households, and 1,497 families residing in the city. The population density is 1,617.2 people per square mile. There are 1,744 housing units at an average density of 446.5 per square mile. On December 12, 2006, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) staged a coordinated predawn raid at E.A. Miller, a meat packing plant in Hyrum, and at five other Swift & Company plants located in the western United States, interviewing workers and hauling off hundreds in buses.

[The folks at E.A. Miller are nice folks, if somewhat misguided. The cattle walk in one door and come out another as boxed meat. As you can see from the population growth, it's a growing community.]

Canning Pantry is owned by Jarden Brands, who among other things, make Ball and Kerr canning jars. Of the things on June's list we found plenty and packed double what she wanted into the back of my ½ full trailer. We filled the remaining space with cases of regular and wide-mouth lids. Pallets of cases of jars were moved into the empty truck,

the first layer remaining on pallets and the remainder removed from the pallets and stacked. We'd have to come back to fill 2-3 more trailers full of jars.

With that, we were ready to head home. We'd travel west and south to I-15, take that south to I-84 south of Ogden and I-84 to I-80 and stop to camp west of Evanston, Wyoming very near the Utah border. The following day we'd drive from Evanston to Kimball, Nebraska. The final day of our trip was a long one with us arriving home well after dark.

"How did it go?"

"We filled all 6 trailers. We have one trailer just for us and it's a mixed load of ammo, pails and the stuff you wanted from Canning Pantry. The owners or someone had cleaned out a portion of the goods at Rainy Day Foods, which happens to be a division of Walton Feed. We got 4¼ trailer loads there. Then we moved to Hyrum and finished filling the ½ trailer with the odds and ends you wanted times two and finished filling the trailer with lids. The last 1½ trailers is nothing but pint and quart jars. We can go back there and get another 2-3 trailer loads of jars."

"You did well."

"Got lucky too. The only town where we saw people was Logan, Utah and we smiled and waved and they smiled and waved back. I can only assume they thought we were taking supplies further south in Utah."

"So no trouble then?"

"Just my back. We handled a lot of the cargo by hand in Hyrum and I can truly say, 'oh my aching back'. To unload the trailer of jars, we're going to have to form a chain of people and hand the boxes from hand to hand. Since we have to go back, I'm going to make a side trip to KC with all 3 rigs and pick up more trade goods."

"Booze and tobacco?"

"Yes. We can let the folks in Springfield unload the five trailers of jars and food. We'll use our 53' trailers for that trip."

"I definitely want to unload that half trailer into our storage building. You know, we discussed taking over those 20 acres on the other side for another warehouse while we were on the trip. I mentioned another pole building to the Springfield people we could use as a warehouse. He said, 'If you need it, we'll build it.'"

Of course the 24/7 security arrangement meant that the folks from Springfield were out early asking about the contents of the trailers.

"We put everything we wanted in the one trailer. We'll unload it and you can pull the other 5 into Springfield so you can unload them. We also need the warehouse pole

building we discussed as soon as possible. This trip is for our benefit, not the towns. However, there are 2-3 trailer loads of jars at Canning Pantry we'll go back for as soon as you have these 5 trailers unloaded."

"What's in it for you?"

"As I said, this trip is for our benefit, not the towns. We're going after some trade goods we spotted earlier. And, I'm not talking about coffee; the Folgers warehouse in Kansas City is empty."

"Booze and tobacco, huh?"

"Why is that the first thing anyone thinks of?"

"Yep, booze and tobacco."

"Trade goods to store in our new warehouse. By the way, what's the ammunition situation here? We can supply 5.56x45mm, 7.62x51mm and 9mmP plus other calibers. I think there's 3 sources available [Midway USA, Hornady and Impact Guns-Ogden], but we'll have to check."

"Are you going to give us the ammo too?"

"I may be slow... but I'm not stupid. Ammo will be a trade item. As far as the new warehouse goes, you supply the materials and as far as the labor... I must say that 5 trailer loads of goods ought to cover the cost of the labor on the first warehouse."

"First?"

"Hey, it was your idea that we become scavengers or salvagers, call it what you want. Fine, we'll do it... some for you and some for ourselves. What we recover for ourselves will go into storage and you can trade for it. I think I may know where to get more coffee now that I think about it [NOLA]. We might even get brave and venture east [Lehman's]. That's pretty risky, you know, because there are more people to the east."

"How large do you want the building to be?"

"I figured you'd build it out of corrugated sheet metal and creosoted posts. How about you build it large enough to use up all the sheet metal?"

"That could be big or small, depending upon what we find for building materials."

"I'll add corrugated sheet metal to our shopping list plus the poles if we see any."

The Dixons – Chapter 10

“Dirt floor?”

“Unless you want to form and pour concrete, dirt will work for us. I’d imagine that everything will end up on pallets so when you have the trailers unloaded, bring back the pallets.”

As I thought it over, I decided that the trips would be for us only or mixed trips where we took a portion of the salvaged goods. If we headed east to Ohio to get a Diamant 525 grain mill and they had them in stock, we would take all they had with the extra burrs, screens, etc. Lehman’s was kind of like an old fashioned hardware store where you could get lamp wicks and all the things hardware stores carried in the long gone past.

That thought got me to thinking of, all things, matches. For years stick matches came in a box of about 250/300 strike anywhere kitchen matches made by Diamond Match Company. Diamond still made them but they were nearly impossible to find. Apparently the federal DOT listed them as hazardous materials and the freight was unbelievable. They’re owned by Jarden now, just like Canning Pantry.

Funny thing about those matches... I had a weak moment and was looking on E-Bay. There was a company who sold the Diamond Strike Anywhere Matches for less than \$50 a case of 48 300 count boxes. The shipping was about \$18-19. Should have bought a couple of cases and stored them in Ziploc bags in the shelter. I said we were going east, but that didn’t include North Carolina. We could get tobacco and booze in KC, Jefferson City and the outskirts of St. Louis.

It may not be like California with 4 liquor stores on every block, but still... Missouri is one of the most alcohol-permissive states, perhaps only behind Nevada and Louisiana. Anyone and his brother can distill up to 100 gallons of white lightning, Missouri doesn’t care and the ATF hasn’t been seen lately. There is one hell of a difference between white lightning and Jack Daniel’s Single Barrel. The former will curl your hair and toes and the latter tickle your tongue.

I was surprised to see them show up bright and early the next morning with the tractors and 5 empty trailers. They’d switched the trailers around and the drums of diesel were now strapped to the walls of the rear trailers. They had one truckload of 2x4s, 2 truckloads of creosoted poles, another truck with 2x8s and a truck loaded with corrugated sheet metal.

“There’s more sheet metal, we’re still counting the number of sheets. We brought 100 to start with. We figured on a 1:1 roof pitch since it will shed snow the best and give you a nice second floor for storage. We’ll install a 4’x6’, 750 pound capacity lift so you can get your goods from the first to the second floor, but don’t expect anything fancy, it will be manual powered. We’ll grade the area level and use the 2x4s for forms so the slab will be 3½” thick. Since a square has a larger area than any other quadrilateral, the building

will be square. They should have a sheet count in an hour or two and we can start forming up. That's all you're going to get, one large warehouse and no more favors."

"In that case, I think we'll fuel up and take off. See you in a couple of days. Are the 2x8s the rafters?"

"Girts. Lateral reinforcement for the poles. We'll probably have to use 2x10s or 2x12s for joists and rafters, depending on the span, and OSB for the second level floor. Don't want to clutter up your floor space if it isn't necessary."

"Good. Later. Boys, let's get fueled up."

"I thought you weren't leaving until they emptied the trailers."

"We weren't... they unloaded last night and I managed to talk them into building the warehouse, no charge. So, the boys and I are going for the trade goods."

"Booze and cigarettes."

"Only partially. I also intend to clean out what we left behind in that solar place. They have an office in Jefferson City and another in a western suburb of St. Louis. We might just as well get all the energy producing components we can. And yes, booze and tobacco products; they'll make great trade items."

"Only until someone gets a still up and running."

"Have you ever tasted white lightning? Even cheap vodka is smoother than most white lightning. That stuff is raw alcohol and close to 190 proof. It would eat its way through a charred white oak barrel. I plan on charging 50¢ for a bottle of the cheap stuff and \$1 to \$1.50 for the moderately priced stuff. We won't sell any of the really good stuff, like Single Barrel for example."

"Are you referring to 50¢ pre-65 silver?"

"Of course."

"That's \$20 of old money for a bottle of cheap booze."

"It's all about the law of supply and demand. We have the supply and sooner or later, they'll have the demand. Hehehe."

"You're going straight to hell."

"If I do I won't mind, I'll be too busy greeting old friends to worry about it."

She was the one who introduced me to the Margarita made with Cuervo 1800 and Grand Mariner. I like them, she loves them. The hardest drink I learned to swallow was a martini. I wasn't partial to gin unless it was mixed with tonic. I eventually became a person who liked very dry martinis, aka gin rocks. In fact I guess I mostly fell in love with ice, soon I was drinking everything on the rocks or straight up. The only time a mixer was added was when the recipe called for it, like gin and tonic.

The difference between an alcoholic and a social drinker is that the social drinker knows when to quit and does. Have you ever seen *Days of Wine and Roses* with Jack Lemmon and Lee Remick? It was one of 2 movies that made me cry. The other was *Long Day's Journey into Night*.

[Public relations man Joe Clay (Jack Lemmon) meets and falls in love with Kirsten Arnesen (Lee Remick), a secretary. Kirsten is a teetotaler until Joe introduces her to social drinking. Reluctant at first, after her first few Brandy Alexander's, she admits that having a drink "made me feel good." Despite the misgivings of her father (Charles Bickford), who runs a San Mateo landscaping business, they get married and have a daughter named Debbie. Joe slowly goes from the "two-martini lunch" to full-blown alcoholism. It affects his work and, in due time, he and Kirsten both succumb to the pleasures and pain of addiction. Joe is demoted due to poor performance brought on by too much booze. He is sent out of town on business. Kirsten finds the best way to pass the time is to drink, and drinks a lot. While drunk one afternoon, she causes a fire in their apartment and almost kills herself and their child. Joe eventually gets fired from the PR firm and goes from job to job over the next several years.

One day, Joe walks by a bar and sees his reflection in the window. He goes home and says to his wife: "I walked by Union Square Bar. I was going to go in. Then I saw myself, my reflection in the window, and I thought, 'I wonder who that bum is.' And then I saw it was me. Now look at me. I'm a bum. Look at me! Look at you. You're a bum. Look at you. And look at us. Look at us. C'mon, look at us! See? A couple of bums."

Seeking escape from their addiction, Joe and Kirsten work together in Mr. Arnesen's business and succeed in staying sober for a while. However, the urges are too strong, and after a late-night drinking binge, Joe destroys an entire greenhouse of his father-in-law's plants while looking for a stashed bottle of liquor. After commitment to a sanitarium, Joe finally gets sober for a while, with the help of Alcoholics Anonymous, a dedicated sponsor named Jim Hungerford (Jack Klugman) and regular AA meetings. When Joe tries to help Kirsten, he instead ends up drinking again, and goes to a liquor store that closed for the night. Joe breaks into the store and steals a bottle, resulting in another trip to the sanitarium.

Hungerford warns him that he must keep sober no matter what, even if that means staying away from Kirsten. He explains to Joe how alcoholics often demonstrate obsessive behavior, pointing out that Kirsten's previous love of chocolate may have been the first sign of an addictive personality, and counsels him that most drinkers hate to drink alone. Joe eventually becomes sober for good and a responsible father to his child

while holding down a steady job. He tries to make amends with his father-in-law by offering him an envelope full of cash for past debts and wrongs, but Mr. Arnesen lashes out at him for getting Kirsten involved in the alcoholic lifestyle. After calming down, Arnesen says that Kirsten has been disappearing for long stretches of time and picking up strangers in bars.

One night, after Debbie is asleep, Kirsten comes to their apartment to attempt a reconciliation. Joe sees that if he were to give in, it could lead to more of his previous self-destructive behavior. Kirsten longs for going back to "the way it was" but as Joe explains to her, "You remember how it really was? You and me and booze – a threesome. You and I were a couple of drunks on the sea of booze, and the boat sank. I got hold of something that kept me from going under, and I'm not going to let go of it. Not for you. Not for anyone. If you want to grab on, grab on. But there's just room for you and me – no threesome."

Kirsten refuses to admit she's an alcoholic, but does acknowledge that without alcohol, she "can't get over how dirty everything looks." "You better give up on me," she says. When Debbie asks "Daddy, will Mommy ever get well?" he says "I did, didn't I?" When Kirsten leaves, Joe fights the urge to go after her. He looks down the street where Kirsten is walking, a "Bar" sign reflecting in the window. Courtesy of you know who. Lemmon admitted to having had a serious drinking problem at one time, which is one reason he looked back on his Oscar-winning role as Harry Stoner in *Save the Tiger* (1973) as perhaps the most gratifying, emotionally fulfilling performance of his career.]

Our first stop was the solar place and we cleaned it out. We also got the addresses of their stores in Jefferson City and St. Louis. Next we went to the Lake City plant and loaded a trailer load of ammo. I figured we could top the load with light weight goods to fill the trailer. There are a fair number of liquor stores in the area and a distributor or two. We went to the grocery wholesalers to get the mixes. We found the bonded warehouse where tobacco products were stored. It was actually more than one, different brands you know. Cigarettes, pipe tobacco and cigars topped the ammo. The tobacco products that we picked up at the liquor stores were moved from the sleepers to join the other tobacco products.

It had been a long day, a steak and ale kind of day if you know what I mean. We'd started a charcoal grill and buried 3 foil wrapper potatoes. They were squeezable in short order and we pulled them out and added the grill, the steaks and set the spuds on the grill to stay warm.

"How about we dig out a bottle of Jack Black and a 12-pack of coke?"

"There's that Jack Daniel's green label."

"That's fourth tier stuff, not up to Jack Black standards. No, open the Jack Black. Where's the butter?"

"In my cooler with the mixes and soft drinks. All Dave has in his cooler is a block of CO₂ and ice."

"No wonder the ice is so cold. All we need now is a salad."

"I'll get it, Ranch or Thousand Island?"

"Have you ever seen me eat Ranch?"

"Yeah, I should have known better."

"Remind me on the way home to pick up 8 Ruger Blackhawks in .45 Colt with 5½" barrels for the pommel bags. We'll hit Jefferson City tomorrow and clean out that solar place, any grocery wholesalers, bars, liquor distributors and bonded warehouses. I don't intend to spend much time in the St Louis area, but we might run by home depending on the radiation level. I'm mainly interested in the solar, liquor and tobacco. Since we have to go through Columbia to get to Jefferson City, I intend to check out Midway USA again."

"Know of any other places to hit? Hey this meal really hits the spot."

"Dad, we might just as well check out Columbia while we're there."

"We'll see how it goes. Cabela's is in Hazelwood and they carry firearms. It might give us a shot at more trade goods."

We had our first sign of trouble on the west side of Columbia on I-70 in the form of a manned roadblock. I pulled up and stopped, lowered the driver's side window. One man came forward with a six-iron on his hip and a Winchester model 94, presumably in .30-30.

"Destination?"

"Jefferson City."

"And from there?"

"West side of St. Louis, Ballwin. We want to check over our home to see if it's still standing and if the radiation level is low enough to return home."

"Where are you coming from?"

"Marshfield by way of Springfield and Kansas City, Missouri."

"What's going on Dad?"

“Well, this young man is playing 20 questions.”

“Is that so?”

“Hey you, stay out of this. It’s none of your business.”

“The 3 of us are traveling together so that makes our business. Where’s Midwest USA?”

“Going shopping?”

“Yeah, I need a new hunting knife.”

“The place is locked up tight.”

“We’ll unlock it. Don’t worry; I’ll leave cash for the knife by a checkout register.”

“Well sure, if that’s all you want. I’ll have them move the cars.”

“You want to lead the way; we don’t know where the place is.”

“I can do that.”

“You might want to get a knife yourself.”

“I can’t pay for it.”

I interrupted, “Don’t worry, we’ll pay for it.”

“Sure, that would be great.”

I got on the radio as we began to move out, “A knife?”

“They carry Cold Steel, Dad.”

“All right, I guess.”

We pulled around back to the loading dock and I got my 30” Stanley key, ala forcible entry bar. The 3 of us had flashlights to further the illusion that we were only looking for knives.

“I like this one.”

“What is it?”

“It’s a Cold Steel Trail Master 9½” San Mai 3 Stainless Steel Clip Point Blade Kraton Handle Black with Nylon Sheath.”

“How much?”

“\$297.99.”

“Got it covered. Anything else?”

“No, just this knife.”

“We’ll lock up.”

“Ok, thanks.”

“Who was that guy?”

“I’m not sure if that was Dumb or Dumber.”

“My money is on a combination of both. He didn’t even get ammo for his revolver or .30-30.”

“You boys see anything you like?”

“I like these.”

“What do you have Don?”

“I have a Cold Steel Ti-Lite 6 Folding 6" Spear Point AUS 8A Stainless Steel Blade Aluminum Handle, a Cold Steel Natchez Bowie Fixed Blade 11¾" VG-1 San Mai III Blade Micarta Handle, a Cold Steel 24" Latin Machete 1055 Carbon Steel Black Blade Polypropylene Handle and a Cold Steel Trench Hawk Tactical Tomahawk 3½" 1055 Carbon Steel Blade 19" Over-all Length Polypropylene Handle.”

“Dave?”

“I’ll take a Cold Steel Laredo Bowie Fixed Blade 10½" VG-1 San Mai III Micarta Handle, Cold Steel 24" Latin Machete 1055 Carbon Steel Black Blade Polypropylene Handle, a Cold Steel Trench Hawk Tactical Tomahawk 3½" 1055 Carbon Steel Blade 19" Overall Length Polypropylene Handle and the same pocket knife, the Ti-Lite 6. What about you?”

“I’m going to get your mother and I the 24" Latin Machetes and the Laredo Bowies. Who is paying?”

“You’re serious?”

“Just wanted to see what you’d say. Put the knives in the sleepers and back up a truck to the loading dock. Take all of the ammo and I mean every last round.”

“Anything else?”

“I’ll look around.”

Well, we got every last round of ammo in every caliber and gauge. Midway carries a large line of products and we probably could have finished loading the trailers and not emptied the place. We’ll keep that in mind and come back later, should a need arise. It’s not like we didn’t know where place was, but asking for directions was a stroke of what, genius? We loaded the ammo into 2 trailers due to the volume and weight. Happened to notice a belt type knife sharpener and took it and several packages of spare belts. When we finished, I wedged the door so it gave the impression of being locked.

We then proceeded to Jefferson City and located the solar business. We made a good haul including an additional 24 submarine batteries, about 12 tons worth. This place was cleaned out and we started on the liquor stores and finally went to the distributor. When we had him cleaned out, we loaded more tobacco products above the ammo in one of the trailers.

We avoided Columbia when we headed for St. Louis, taking US 54 northeast to the old Highway 40 interchange. When we reached Wentzville, we switched to I-64 and headed southeast to Ballwin. We exited at Clarkson Road and took it to Manchester Road and on to home. A quick check of the CD V-715 gave a reading just below 100mR/hr. The streets weren’t all that wide so we dropped a trailer and pulled up my semi, parking in the middle of the street. Our home was still standing.

“Dave, gather up all the clothes and store them in your sleeper. Don, you get the camping gear we left behind and the 2 propane bottles. Put them in your sleeper.”

“Our sleepers are back almost 2 blocks!”

“Walk, that’s why God gave you 2 good legs. Move.”

I grabbed a bundle of new U Haul boxes we kept around for storage and started emptying the pantry and then the storage shelves. I even grabbed the trade goods, 6 cartons of very stale Marlboros. Another box got what liquor and mixes we had on hand and it was a pitiful comparison to what was in the trailers. But, there were two cases of a very special Madera. The things I moved went into the trailer.

“Got the clothes?”

“One more load for both of us.”

“When you come back, one of you climb up into my trailer and move the boxes forward. The other can carry out the things I’m packing. You can move those two cases of Madera wine first.”

Long story short, we finished up cleaning out what we wanted from home in under an hour. I don’t think we’re coming back, unless it’s to go shopping. This time we went for the bonded warehouses first and loaded all the tobacco products above the ammo. Next we located the liquor distributors using the business to business yellow pages. We did well. However there was still the solar place. It was running 200mR/hr. But, they had 50 submarine batteries and close to a dozen and a half Xantrex XW6048 Hybrid Inverter/chargers with enough accessories to go around. Better still, they had over 100 Surrette 820a/h AGM gel-cell 8 volt batteries. We took those and located an RV dealer who sold the Onan QD 12.5s. That finished our shopping, we were way over loaded and almost too tired to drive.

We picked up I-44 and settled in for the long drive. There weren’t that many cars to dodge and we made it in about the same time it took us when we originally came down. We pulled our road trains into our place and shut down the engines. I don’t know how truckers do it day in and day out. I was beyond exhausted.

“How was your trip?”

“Productive... exhausting... I can’t remember being this tired.”

“While you were gone, they got the ground leveled, the poles placed, the floor formed and poured. Apparently they used an accelerator because I was told they’d start construction tomorrow. Those two Deputies wives, Shelia and Stella, have a lot of gardening experience and have home canned for years. We might use up some of those 4,000 or so jars we have.”

“We’re starving; do you have any leftovers or something fast?”

“How about some deluxe pizzas? We whipped up a dozen or more and froze most of them.”

“That would be great. Well, the house is still standing but the radiation level was only slightly below 100mR/hr. We brought all of the clothing and all of the remaining food. I didn’t open the freezer since the power has been off for so long.”

“There wasn’t that much in it. Most of space was taken up by frozen gallon jugs of water. I’ll get the pizzas while the oven is pre-heating. I have something exciting to tell you.”

“How do these look?”

“Like professional made pizzas. You said you had some news?”

“One of the local farmers traded us 2 hogs and a beef for a case of 7.62×51mm soft-point ammo. Our freezers are full and it’s not all water jugs.”

“We finished cleaning out Midway USA. We came into Columbia on I-70 and they had a barricade up. Some kid came up to the semi and starting playing 20 questions. When Dave and Don came up and got involved, they told him they were looking for hunting knives at Midway. We played dumb and got the guy to show us where it was. We broke in, again, and found him a knife. While we were at it we picked up a few knives for us. Then we took all of the remaining ammo, 2 trailer loads.

“When they get the warehouse erected, we’ll have to stop and install PV panels. We went to 3 different stores of the same chain and cleaned them out. We got 74 submarine batteries, over 100 of the Surette 820a/h AGM gel-cell 8 volt batteries, several tons of PV panels, several 48 volt wind turbines and bulk cabling and connectors. Oh, yeah, the automatic panel aimers that are controlled by the 6048s.”

“How about liquor and tobacco?”

“More than the four of us could drink in our lifetimes or chain smoke in our lifetimes. I even brought those stale cartons of Marlboros from home. We need to follow TOM’s advice and visit the Res. How was the beef and pork cut and prepared?”

“I had one hog turned into conventional cuts with boneless loins and baby back ribs. The hams, picnics and bacon was brined and smoked. The excess meat/trimmings were held back for sausage. The second hog started off the same except the loins were also brined and smoked. The combined excess meat/trimmings were ground into sausage. The leaf lard was rendered and given to us in pails. The processor kept the remaining fat to process into lard he could sell to cover his processing costs.

“The beef was cut just like you see it in a meat case with exceptions. Don’t be looking for any tri-tip, it’s in the ground meat. The butcher kept the kidneys as part of his compensation. Oh, he added boneless beef and brought the hamburger up to 10% fat or ground sirloin. We have 4 Swiss steaks, I don’t know how many round steaks, filet mignon, New York strips, arm roasts, chuck roasts and shanks for stews or whatever. It came to 775 pounds of choice beef in round numbers.”

The Dixons – Chapter 11

“Pizza’s ready.”

“Dave, drag out a cold 12 pack of Coke.”

“You got soft drinks?”

“Soft drinks are also mixers. We went back to the same wholesalers and got the soft drinks and mixers like tonic, Collins mix, margarita mix, and so forth. All told there’s half a truckload of mixers and soft drinks. We ran out of space in St. Louis or we could have had more liquor and soft drinks. If they haven’t already, someone will start brewing root beer aka sarsaparilla.

“Sarsaparilla is a soft drink, originally made from the *Smilax regelii* plant, but now usually made with artificial flavors. Sarsaparilla was popular in the US in the 19th century. According to advertisements for patent medicines of the period, it was considered to be a remedy for skin and blood problems. Ruth Tobias [Huffington Post, Food Writer] notes that it evokes images of “languid belles and parched cowboys.” In Hollywood westerns from the 1930s to the 1950s, to order sarsaparilla in a saloon (instead of whiskey) is often met with mockery by the manly cowboys nearby. Now, however, sarsaparilla is considered a type of root beer.”

“I won’t tell A&W if you don’t.”

“They already know, I’m sure. They probably have chemists to come up with their artificial flavors. Dave how old are you?”

“Coming up on 18 and Don is coming up on 17.”

“When we headed here on the eve of the war, you were 14 and Don was 13.”

“Time flies when you’re having fun?”

“Your mother and I have discussed at various times that with you coming of age, you’ll need homes of your own for yourselves and your families.”

“Family? Hell, I’d settle for a date!”

“David, watch your mouth.”

“Yes mother. What I said was true all the same. The thing that worries me is some bimbo getting her hooks into me because of what the family has instead of what I have to offer.”

“You should be able to tell the ones whose brains are 8 inches below their chins. Bimbo, in its popular English language usage, describes a woman who acts in a sexually promiscuous manner. The term can also be used to describe a woman who is physically attractive but is perceived to have a low intelligence or poor education. Rarely, the term is used as a jocular, possibly slightly flattering description. It is almost always used as a derogatory insult towards a woman.

“A “dumb blonde”, on the other hand, comes from the fact that blonde hair in women has been considered attractive and desirable. On the other hand, a blonde woman is often perceived as making little use of intelligence and as a “woman who relied on her looks rather than on intelligence.” The latter stereotype of “dumb blonde” is exploited in blonde jokes.

“The third type is the “valley girl”. A “valley girl” (or Val, Val Gal) is a stereotype depicting a socio-economic and ethnic class of white women characterized by the colloquial California English dialect Valley speak and vapid materialism. The term originally referred to an ever increasing swell of semi-affluent and affluent middle-class and upper-middle class girls living in the early 1980s Los Angeles bedroom communities of San Fernando Valley. The Valley's proximity to Hollywood and prevalence of Jewish American women among both the demographic and the Los Angeles media machine helped give the stereotype large exposure to the rest of the world.

“In time the traits and behaviors spread across the United States and abroad, metamorphosing into a caricature of unapologetically spoiled “ditzes” and “airheads” more interested in shopping, personal appearance and social status than intellectual development or personal accomplishment.”

“You’re skirting dangerous territory yourself Jerry.”

“But you know what I mean.”

“Yes I do, a chest out to there and a vacuum between their ears. It’s only a suggestion you two, but bring them home to meet mama. Those that are genuinely interested in you as a person will stand out, believe you me.”

“I’m dead tired and, you know, I think the next trip can wait for a few days. I want to stay around and unload what we have in the trailers and reorganize the goods stored in the old storage building. We need to get the PV panel mounting brackets installed and connected to the control panel. We need to mount the PV panels and install the wind turbines and we need to hook in the QD 12.5s. Plus we need to find more tanks to fuel the generators.”

“Why don’t we just haul a fuel trailer next to the warehouse?”

“It would be a fire hazard.”

“Not a double, just a single tanker, what, 7-9,000-gallons?”

“That might be doable, I’ll sleep on it.”

“What’s the problem with his suggestion?”

“Well, think about it. We’ll have most of our trade goods in the warehouse. Admitted, diesel isn’t as flammable as gasoline; it would only take one stray bullet and the tank could blow and probably burn down the warehouse.”

“Could you park the tanker further away and pump the diesel through a pipe to the generators?”

“We could bury a 2” pipe and use a reducer between the tanker and the hose connected to the pipe.”

“Hose?”

“We’d need some flexibility considering how difficult it would be to park the trailer in the same exact spot. I think that should do it and we can split the 2” line down to match the generator engine fuel inlets. We could accomplish that in short order using the Troy-bilt to start the pipe trench and shoveling out the loose soil.”

“How come you usually seem to have a solution as soon as the question is raised?”

“Necessity is the mother of invention and the more I learn, the easier it seems to happen. I plan on trading off the Surrrette batteries and the excess 6048s. One hundred two batteries and 17 of the 6048s will be the limit. It may not give them a lot of power but 6kw should handle the important things. And like the man said, these probably will go to the wealthy. But you’re wrong, I don’t have all the answers and I’m doing much of this by guess or by golly.”

They had the hard part done already and watching the warehouse come to completion was simply amazing. They had pre-built trusses to support the roof. Those were stacked, just waiting to be put into place. Given the span, they’d doubled up 2×12s and used one row of support poles down the middle. The corrugated metal was installed except for the roof covering. The lift was already installed and I could only assume it had come from an old building. It did have new rope. The 4’x6’, 750 pound capacity lift platform was near the support poles so we could easily lift goods to the second floor, if we choose.

“I see you’re back.”

“We got in late last night.”

“What’s in the trailers?”

“Trade goods.”

“All 6?”

“Yep.”

“When do you plan on going back to Utah?”

“Just as soon as we have the trailers unloaded, all of our supplies and trade goods sorted and the electrical situation for the warehouse worked out.”

“What are you planning to use to accomplish that?”

“We’ll mount the adjustable PV panel supports and the PV panels. Then we’ll install a couple of wind turbines. After, we’ll install a pair of QD 12.5s and drag over a tanker which we’ll set right about there. We have to bury a 2” pipe to transfer the fuel from the tanker to the generators. Finally, 6048s and associated gear have to be installed and the place wired.”

“We’ll gladly do all that if it will get you on the road sooner.”

“Well ok, I suppose. We still have to unload the trailers and sort everything out... ourselves.”

“Tell you what, since you probably have whatever you need for the power, just unload that and take 2-3 days to rest up. By then, your new warehouse should be complete and the power installed. You can wait and unload the trailers when you get back. I assume that this next trip will be for joint supplies?”

“Yep.”

“How many more trips to you envision at the moment?”

“We’re not sure since it depends on what we find; one for sure and possibly two. We’ve already been to Canning Pantry and all that’s left there that we want are the Mason jars. Then there’re 2 stops in Orem and another in Heber so that will probably involve a second trip. There’s just no way to tell.”

“What’s in Orem besides Emergency Essentials?”

“Impact Guns.”

“Oh, I didn’t know.”

“They have 3 stores, West Salt Lake City, Orem and Boise, Idaho.”

“Have you acquired any ammo?”

“Oh yeah, lots.”

“Trade goods?”

“Absolutely.”

“How are you going to handle it?”

“It seems like an old silver dime is running about \$4 and an old silver quarter \$10. The standard ratio of silver to gold is 50 to 1, according to the US bullion coins. A roll of dimes is going for \$200 and it contains 3.575 ounces of silver. Two hundred divided by 3.575 equals \$55.44 an ounce and fifty times that makes gold \$2,797.20 an ounce. A half ounce would be \$1,398.60, a quarter ounce \$699.30 and a tenth ounce \$279.72. “Dime will be \$4, quarters \$10 and half dollars \$20. I figure to use the law of supply and demand to determine what something is worth now but those are the metal values. You’ll probably see some rounding in gold to \$2,800, \$1,400, \$700 and \$280.”

“What about cash?”

“Hang onto it. P.T. Barnum said *there’s a sucker born every minute*. Hell, it doesn’t even make good toilet paper.”

“You still have toilet paper?”

“Well, yeah. TOM always said DON’T FORGET THE CHARMIN. We had a 10 year supply to begin with and more now. There are some things you can’t too much of.”

“How old are you Jerry?”

“I just turned 40.”

“How did you manage to accumulate what you have in that short of a period of time?”

“My folks were big believers in life insurance. My sister and I split 1.4 million when they were killed and another 300 grand when their house sold.”

“Where’s your sister live?”

“She lived in Manhattan, New York City.”

“Sorry.”

“Thanks.”

My older sister, God rest her soul, wasn't married. She always dated wealthy men of the Jewish persuasion. She probably had most of the \$850,000 in the bank, if not more. She commented once that they were *big spenders*. She had a job with an advertising agency for appearances sake. I often wondered if she knew Debbie Harry (Call Me).

“Say, were you planning on insulating the warehouse?”

“You never mentioned it so no.”

“It needs to be insulated and have a heat source, probably a propane heater on each floor. We can connect one of the propane delivery trucks to supply the fuel.”

“You don't want a tank?”

“You have one?”

“It's 3,300-gallons.”

Perfect. Yes, install it.”

“We can bury a diesel tank if you like.”

“How big?”

“It's a refurbished 14,000-gallon steel tank.”

“That's even better than my idea. Can you bury the propane tank too?”

“If that finishes your request, yes.”

“It will. Fluorescent light fixtures? Spare bulbs, ballasts and starters?”

“No mas.”

“We'll leave in a couple of days and use the 6 empty trailers. Figure a week for the trip. How's your garden doing?”

“We'd be better off if we'd planted both 5 acre fields you offered. I think we'll do that next year.”

“Well look, why don't you turn all of the land behind the warehouse into a garden?”

“Simple, no well.”

“Did you look?”

“Sure didn’t.”

“Check it out before you decide.”

I knew the wells were there, we’d checked. Apparently the owner had intended to subdivide the land into 5 acre parcels and each had a water well. And, it wasn’t like we couldn’t provide power setups, for a price.

“Do you need anything unloaded before we make our next trip?”

“Soft drinks?”

“Anything else?”

“It will keep until you get back. How many more trips?”

“One or two, depending upon what we find. We’ll finish up Canning Pantry on this trip. Did you overlook anything?”

“Could you make a side trip to Fruita, CO?”

“What’s in Fruita, CO?”

“S&S Innovations, Corporation. Tattler canning lids.”

“Where is Fruita, CO?”

“On I-70, northwest of Grand Junction.”

“Not this trip, but we’ll include it in our plans.”

Grand Junction, Colorado was on the western border of Colorado and any chance of getting more Tattler lids and rings was worth a diversion. We’d eventually use up the regular canning lids since they were single use. While we had a lifetime supply of the Tattler rings and lids, this would be a hot trade item in the future, just like the stuff from Impact Guns, a class 3 dealer. I wonder how hot West Salt Lake City is. Did they hit Boise, Idaho?

When we left 2 days later, they had located the wells and were thinking about using those 15 acres if they could power the wells. I had informed them that we could solve their problems when we returned. We would be making back to back trips; depending on how long it took them to empty the trailers of their share of the goods and how long it took us to store our share.

We had little trouble in Hyrum and decided to load one trailer full of goods similar to what June had requested. Our next stop was Emergency Essentials in Orem and we filled 5 trailers to capacity (volume). Upon our return, we gave them 4 trailers to unload and unloaded the other two into the new warehouse. We also unloaded one of the trailers from our KC-St. Louis trip. Four days later we were on the road back to Orem and cleaned out Emergency Essentials and put a dent in Impact Guns inventory. This was another 6 day trip but it took us 4 days to unload and store the 3 trailer loads we claimed and a second of the six from the KC-St. Louis trip.

We fueled up and headed back to Orem to finish with Impact and check out Nitro-Pak in Heber. That filled the trailers and we headed home. We claimed 3 of the trailers again and it took 4 days to unload, including sorting some of the goods between the old storage building and new warehouse and unloading the third trailer from our earlier trip. We worked a deal with our Springfield power broker for PV panels, quantity depending on the size of the sheds, 3 inverters, 18 Surrrette batteries, 3 20kw wind turbines and 3 QD 10s, that we found. That would let them set up power for the wells. Price, 12 ounces of gold, any denomination was acceptable, or the equivalent in silver Eagles. They paid with 6 gold Eagles and 300 silver Eagles and our agreement that they now owned the 15 acres with an easement for access.

“We’re going to finish unloading the last three trailers from the KC-St. Louis trip and get those goods squared away. We’ll share the remainder from Nitro-Pak, but the balance of the trip is strictly for ourselves.”

“Where are you going?”

“Heber, of course, West Salt Lake City, maybe Boise, Idaho and perhaps Grand Junction, Colorado.”

[Ball Company headquarters moved from Muncie to Broomfield, Colorado in 1998. Ball no longer produces the glass fruit jars; the license to produce the jars now is owned by Jarden Home Brands. Jarden produces all lids for all brands of fruit jars at its Muncie plant. Jars are made by a variety of glass producers. They’re called Mason jars because they were invented and patented by John Landis Mason, in 1858.]

“What’s in those other places?”

“Trade goods.”

“You may have trouble trading with us; you have a fair share of our gold and silver.”

“So... salvage some. This will probably be our last trip. We didn’t attempt to salvage gold and silver in St. Louis and didn’t get much in Kansas City, Missouri.”

“How do you find the stuff?”

“We let our fingers do the walking... the yellow pages of course!”

If one is looking for a retailer, the best place to look is the regular yellow pages. If one is looking for wholesalers or distributors, the best place to look is the business to business yellow pages. They should be able to find precious metal dealers in the regular yellow pages. There was no need to let him in on what we'd learned while salvaging.

On a hunch, based on some of the stories, Dave and I went into Springfield for the first time in a long time. We/I were looking for an oxy-acetylene rig and thermal lances. It had occurred to me that several times in the stories, mostly Jerry's, the main character had to use a thermal lance to gain access to a vault. We'd run into that very situation in Orem at Impact Guns so I followed the logical conclusion and opted to get and learn to use thermal lances. Specifically, get Dave trained in their use and I observed the training, just in case something came up.

Naturally the lessons and supplies we need didn't come without a cost, so I had taken some silver Eagles along. Some of their silver Eagles, in case you're curious. I also made sure we had ample bottles of gas, and 2 bottles of oxygen for every bottle of acetylene. When we did finally leave, our first stop was in Heber where we filled 1 trailer. We then returned to Orem and got into that vault. They didn't have a lot of class 3 stuff, mostly silencers. We found and took the matching handgun and long arms for every suppressor plus the remaining ammunition, filling a 2nd and part of a 3rd trailer.

We had room and decided to try West Salt Lake City. We found the store listed in the Salt Lake City yellow pages and filled the balance of the 3rd, the 4th and part of the 5th trailer. After discussing it over supper on the second day, we decided to park the 2 semis and four trailers, locked up of course with the motors disabled, and take the 3rd rig to Boise. Don said we should just go on to Lewiston and get some handgun ammo from Speer. I told him I'd sleep on it.

It was interstate all the way and 340 miles. Lewiston was another 270+, not interstate, miles and I deferred the decision until we'd seen what we'd get from Impact Guns in Boise. While we didn't fill both trailers, we finished off the 5th and half the 6th. Then I remembered Grand Junction and tried to plot a course from Boise to there.

It appeared to be 620-625 miles and the best route seemed to be to return Salt Lake City and follow I-15 south to Spanish Fork where we could pick up US 6 to I-70 and I-70 east to Fruita. I was ok with it that far. I didn't want to go through Denver, period. I decided we could take 550 southeast to Montrose and pick up 50 and head for Pueblo. It would give us a chance see Garden City, Kansas and look for water in the Arkansas River that TOM took a beating for.

We could skirt Wichita and slip down to Oklahoma City and or Tulsa since both were on I-44. If the conditions permitted, we could look around for more trade goods or maybe that grocery wholesaler. Surely both cities had grocery wholesalers.

Fruita wasn't abandoned and that firm that made Tattler lids and rings was open for business. Not wanting to deplete our supply of silver, I had the gold I brought along. We bought all they'd sell us and piled them in the sleepers rather than the trailers. It was a whole lot of rings and lids and we bought both regular and wide mouth. When I went to pay, he said that will be \$1,250 dollars.

Dollars? Like P.T. Barnum said *there's a sucker born every minute*. He wanted dollars; he got dollars, crisp new \$100s and smaller bills to pay him in full. Of course he held each bill up to the light to check the strip and holograph and even used one of those funny pens on each bill, like it made a difference. I couldn't get us back on the road fast enough.

"Dad, what was that all about?"

"He took cash."

"So?"

"Paper money, which is backed by the full faith of the US government."

"What US government?"

"Exactly. He gave me a strange look when I pocketed my poke and brought out my wallet."

"You didn't set him straight?"

"Nope, I gave him exactly what he asked for. I figure to go south and pickup US 50 and take it to near Wichita. We can bypass Wichita and check on Oklahoma City and Tulsa and then head home. I think we should move the Tattler stuff to the trailer so we have the sleepers free. Keep your eyes open for a rest stop or pull-off."

It wasn't until the junction with US 50 that we had a chance to empty the sleepers into the only trailer with room. We took advantage of the stop to use the faculties at an abandoned service station and take a break to eat. When we finished eating the Mountain House meal, we made another pit stop, refueled the semis and headed east. US 50 certainly was no Interstate even if it was leading us towards home.

We stopped outside of Pueblo, had dinner and coffee. I had the bottle of Jack Black but the boys didn't bring up having a drink before bedtime. I must have been tired; I don't remember my head hitting the pillow. I must have shut off the alarm clock because I eventually woke to banging on the door.

The Dixons – Chapter 12

“Who is it?”

“David.”

“What’s up?”

“The sun has been up for almost 3 hours, are you ok?”

“Yeah, just tired.”

“We’ve been holding off on breakfast and are about to starve. Shake a leg.”

“Coffee ready?”

“Second pot just finished perking.”

I used an Assurance personal washcloth to clean my hands and face.

“Here, it’s hot and slightly strong. Don made it, not me.”

“What’s for breakfast?”

“Mountain House scrambled eggs and bacon, Mountain House scrambled eggs and ham or instant grits.”

“I’ll go with the grits.”

“How far do you think we’ll get today?”

“That mostly depends on when we leave.”

“We refueled the semis and can leave as soon as we’re done eating and cleaned up. I’ll pour the extra coffee into your Stanley thermos.”

“You made a big pot?”

“Yes, 20 cups.”

“I sure hate to throw good coffee away.”

“My thermos is empty and Don’s has the lemonade. I can take the extra.”

“In that event, we should be near Oklahoma City by sundown.”

“You know it doesn’t seem logical to go to either. We’re full up. We can drop the trailers when we get home. We can unload them over the next week and come back to Oklahoma.”

“It seems like we’ve been on a dead run all summer.”

“We have. But we only have to make one more trip.”

“And, it’s closer to home.”

We had one trailer from Nitro-Pak for Springfield and 5 trailers from this trip to unload into the warehouse including rearranging the storage building and warehouse. And, after our trip to Oklahoma and unloading those things, more rearranging and then the hard part; a full inventory.

“How was this trip?”

“Only a trailer load from Nitro-Pak and I’m giving that to Springfield. But, we’re nearly full up. Tattler was open for business and took cash.”

“Cash isn’t worth the price of the paper it’s printed on.”

“He wanted cash so I gave him cash, \$1,250.”

“So no food this trip?”

“We packed the Hungry Man MREs last so we could pull those if you want them.”

“Yes, do that, you never know when an MRE might come in handy. What on earth did you get besides the Tattler lids?”

“Firearms and ammo, lots of firearms and ammo.”

“No precious metals?”

“We’ll look for some in Tulsa and Oklahoma City.”

“And grocery wholesalers.”

“Especially grocery wholesales, liquor distributors, tobacco products and I guess precious metals.”

When it was said and done, we spent 3 weeks at home, sorting the ammo by caliber, bullet weight and bullet type. We had to give up more of Springfield’s precious metals to get shelving material. The firearms were in their shipping boxes for the most part. We

had to build gun racks for the rest. Food and paper products ended up in the storage building and all of the trade goods in the warehouse. The top tier booze went into the storage building along with the food.

The lighter goods were stored on the 2nd floor of the warehouse and the heavier goods on the lower floor. The 3 banks of submarine batteries were in one corner and connected to the 2 power panels and 6 inverters. That power was connected to the twin banks of submarine batteries in the basement using the rolls of bulk cable we'd salvaged. The Surette batteries were stored on pallets.

We had food for years and still had the trip to Oklahoma and possibly Ohio. Between the spare parts sets and new Country Living grain mills, we didn't really need to go east. Even so, we didn't totally nix the idea, we just tabled it. Before we left, we even spent some time on the range, refreshing our firearms skills. June joined us, but it rapidly became apparent that Shelia, Stella and she hadn't spent all their time gardening.

The trip to Tulsa and Oklahoma City didn't fill all six trailers, but it was a near thing. We did manage to improve our precious metal holdings, substantially, by searching pawnshops in addition to precious metal dealers. We did have to locate more thermal lances to complete the task. We had 4 trailers filled with products from the grocery wholesalers, one and one-half filled with booze and tobacco products finishing out the load with 4 more QD 12.5s plus filters and Castrol oil.

"Are you home for good?"

"Only until the next trip but I don't expect that to be anytime soon. We'll unload this stuff and put it up. After that, we're going to inventory everything we have. We'll have to store part of what we got from the grocery wholesalers in the warehouse, probably the paper products. We got every last roll of bath tissue, including the cheap stuff. We'll move all the cheap stuff from the storage building along with the cheap stuff on the trucks to the warehouse and store the Charmin and quilted Northern in the storage building. You can help by moving your personal items to the storage building and those you don't use to the warehouse.

"I'll get the precious metals from my sleeper compartment."

"You found some?"

"Quite a bit actually, we hit the pawn shops too."

"Praise the Lord."

"He didn't help us load or unload a single bit of it!"

"You know what I mean."

“Maybe I should, we didn’t get into a single firefight during the entire time we spent salvaging.”

We had been prepared from the outset to defend ourselves if the property in question was without doubt abandoned. Considering the number of people we didn’t see and remembering June’s little bout with what we suspected was Anthrax, perhaps that accounted for the absence of humanity. But, where did Springfield fit into that picture? We hadn’t heard any reports of Anthrax in Springfield. Which got me right back to the manure we tilled into the garden. But, June had pulmonary Anthrax, not cutaneous. Some mysteries aren’t meant to be solved. Where is Natalee Holloway?

When we unloaded the bounty from this trip, we sorted as we went and moved things to and from the storage building. We indeed had to move all the cheap bath tissue and feminine hygiene supplies that June didn’t use to the warehouse. There was more of her brand than she’d ever use so it gave her some trade goods of her own. We hadn’t overlooked male needs but therein lay a problem. They hadn’t made Fourex natural lamb skin condoms in years and I wouldn’t trust old latex condoms as far as I could throw a truckload. The only solution seemed to be Trojan Kling-Tite Naturalamb Condoms. There was one hypoallergenic condom made from synthetic polyisoprene that we decided to give a try. The Trojans went into the storage building.

Hey, the war reverted or will revert the country back maybe 100 years when things wear out. Your horsepower won’t depend on the size of your engine that no longer runs, but on what you feed your horses. People would eventually be depending on black powder firearms because all you needed was homemade black powder, a bullet mold and a primer. Primers we had plenty of. Pyrodex not so much of but enough for our needs.

And the thing about having the Ruger Blackhawks in .45 Colt was that one could load a full 40gr of black power making the cartridges universal to the revolver and the 1892 rifle. We picked up several powder scales, among other things. We’d run across 2 battery recycling plants and had enough lead ingots to last our lifetimes and the lifetimes of those folks in Springfield.

You remember the guy saying “You’re not from around here are you?” That was right before he accused us of having a fort. His remarks at the time gave me an attitude so far as the folks from Springfield were concerned. We’re strangers, outsiders, to them. But we’re good enough to do their salvage work. So be it, it’s no skin off my nose. They’re going to need to do their own salvaging now because we’re done, unless it’s just for us... for more trade goods. We’re keeping our 3 semis and 6 trailers. We’ll probably have to do something to protect the tires from weathering; I’m just not sure what. I checked around and it was suggested that we jack the tires free of the ground, apply 303 Aerospace Protectant and cover the tires.

You’re not from around here are you? The hell you say, we’ve put down roots, long deep roots. Thomas Wolfe wrote, *You can’t go back home to your family, back home to*

your childhood, ... back home to a young man's dreams of glory and of fame ... back home to places in the country, back home to the old forms and systems of things which once seemed everlasting but which are changing all the time-back home to the escapes of Time and Memory. Excerpt from You Can't Go Home Again.

Home is where the heart is; and Snippe's heart was a traveler – a locomotive heart, perambulating; and it had no tendencies toward circumscription and confine. – Attributed to Joseph C. Neal, 1847.

*Cling to thy home! If there the meanest shed
Yield thee a hearth and shelter for thy head,
And some poor plot, with vegetables stored,
Be all that Heaven allots thee for thy board,
Unsavory bread, and herbs that scatter'd grow
Wild on the river-brink or mountain-brow;
Yet e'en this cheerless mansion shall provide
More heart's repose than all the world beside.*
Leonidas I – μολῶν λαβέ

I'm not so sure I'm as brave a Leonidas, time will tell, I suppose. We have a well-equipped OT, weapons and ammo, all the pleasures of life, in a sense. But we don't have those houses for the boys yet and they haven't really had a chance to get into Springfield and meet any young women their ages. We've been discussing it and have decided to make one last trip to KC and pick up two new 3 bedroom singlewides, with furnishings, before spring.

Instead of taking semis, we'd take 2 of the 3 Hummers. We had to replace the pintle hitches with ball hitches and went heavy duty with hitches rated at 16,000 pounds GTW. I assumed that meant gross towing weight not gross tongue weight. We got 3 sizes of balls with the load leveling hitches. We were using the first 2 Hummers, the ones with M240B and M2A2. By the time we'd selected homes and furnishings and got them back home, we were wishing we'd put the hitches on the semis.

The homes were nice, 18'x84' with propane stove, dishwasher and refrigerator. We added an upright freezer, propane dryer and front loading clothes washer plus Ethan Allen furniture. A set of bunk beds with dressers in one bedroom, a crib and youth bed with dresser in the second and a king sized bedroom suite in the master bedroom. Each boy picked his house and the furnishings and I helped by finding leveling stands, heat tapes and skirting.

By the time we were ready to return home, it was nearing sunset. We decided to lie over and leave the next morning. I dug out 3 Hungry Man MREs, the coffee pot and the Coleman propane stove.

“Once they’re set up, we’re going to have to find someone to clean them,” Dave observed.

“You thinking about some middle aged married woman?”

“That’s what I had in mind.”

“Why not hire her teenage daughter and sees what develops?”

“Nah... it could never be that simple.”

“Maybe Don could hire her younger sister to clean his home and keep the work all in the family.”

“Is that an order?”

“It’s a suggestion. You boys are free to do whatever you like. I suggest you take your mother along with you if you do decide to follow my advice.”

“Why?”

“Take your mother’s advice. She said, ‘It’s only a suggestion you two, but bring them home to meet mama. Those that are genuinely interested in you as a person will stand out, believe you me.’ If you take her along, you won’t have to bring them home to meet mama.” While I wasn’t serious when I suggested sisters, I think the boys may have taken me seriously.

We had a dickens of a time leveling the 2 homes since we didn’t really know what we were doing. We had to run water, septic and electrical lines for both homes. We put in a 4th conduit for antenna cables although we’d have to hunt up more radios.

Specifically, we needed 2 CB base stations, 3 CB mobile radios for the Hummers, 2 CB portables, 5 CM-300s with 2 power supplies and 4 CP-200s. Plus 2 of any wideband amateur base stations and, if we could find them, 4 wideband amateur mobiles. The Suburban had a CM-300 and a Cobra mobile SSB CB. The 5th conduit held DC cables from the solar panels mounted on top of the 2 homes and which were connected to the setup in our basement.

June and the boys went shopping for 2 housekeepers. They would clean twice weekly due to the amount of dust in the air and would be paid in food, silver or a combination of both. I went along to find some coaxial cables for the 4th conduit. We still had an ample supply of the 0000 cable for the power circuits. It was another case of overkill; we could have probably used 0 or no. 1 without a problem.

What I found was a spool of RG-8 and a box of connectors. Then I had to hunt up someone to install the connectors after we pulled the cables. The radio shop where I

found the coax and connectors had a lot of radios on hand and the owner complained that the problem was nobody could seem to afford to buy his radios.

"I'll tell you what, if you can provide the radios we need, I'll pay in gold."

"What do you want?"

"You have Motorola?"

"Which models?"

"CM-300 32 channel and CP-200 16 channel."

"How many do you need?"

"Five of the first with 2 power supplies, 2 base antennas and 3 mobile antennas plus 4 of the CP-200 16 channel."

"I can do that."

"Two CB SSB base stations with antennas?"

"I have one, a Galaxy DX-2547 AM/SSB CB Base Station."

"Base station antennas?"

"Now there I can supply 2."

"How about 3 Cobra AM/SSB 148 GTLs?"

"No problem."

"Forty Channel CB portables?"

"How many?"

"Four."

"Can do, Cobra ok?"

"Sure. You carry amateur gear?"

"I didn't, but my friend who did bugged-out and sold me his inventory so I may have what you need."

"Mobiles?"

“Sorry.”

“Base stations?”

“Oh yeah, you wouldn’t believe me if I told you.”

“How many do you have?”

“Seven and they’re all the same brand and model.”

“And...?”

“Oh, Kenwood TS-2000s. They’re still new in the unopened boxes.”

“Antennas?”

“Seven but they aren’t the best.”

“What do you have?”

“MFJ-1798 verticals. They’re rated at 1,500 watts PEP power.”

“Power supplies?”

“I only have 3, sorry.”

“Kenwood?”

“Yes, they match the radios.”

“Now the big question, how much?”

“Give me a few minutes.”

“Ok. You said gold. It’ll take 8 ounces, all in tenth ounce coins. That will include the equipment we’ve discussed, installation of the radios and antennas and poles to mount the antennas on, if needed.”

“Seven ounces.”

“The eight ounces is firm, take it or leave it, sorry I can’t do better. I’m basically selling to you on a cost basis and throwing in my labor to get the systems up and running.”

“What kind of poles?”

“Utility poles, 120’, however many it takes.”

“We only need 2.”

“Good, they’re a bear to raise. I’ll put 20’ in the ground giving you a 100’ above ground tower. Plus, I’ll get the antennas installed by a friend who’s a high linesman.”

“Ok if I give you 8 one ounce coins and break them for you later? I don’t carry more than 10 of the tenth ounce at a time.”

“You have 10 on you?”

“Yes.”

“I’ll take those plus 7 of the one ounce if you promise to break them when I deliver the stuff.”

“Deal. When will you deliver?”

“First thing tomorrow. You can take the radios with you if you have the room in your trunk.”

“We have a Suburban and we’ll make room for everything but the antennas and the roll of coax.”

Do you remember the Deputies wives Shelia and Stella? Each had a teenage daughter who had been “raised right”. June knew this and knew the girls ages were about the same as our boys. The young ladies already had her seal of approval and had been to the acreage numerous times when the boys and I had been off salvaging. Shelia’s daughter Barbara was David’s age and Stella’s daughter Rachel was Donald’s age.

From what I gather, while we were up in KC with the Hummers getting the homes June had driven in to Springfield and discussed the possibility of the girls becoming the boys’ housekeepers. I can’t speak for whatever the mothers thought, but it was a done deal when we returned with the homes. I’m nearly certain that this explains June’s unusual quietness when we returned with the homes.

Both young women were the outdoors type and not afraid to get their hands dirty gardening or canning the produce. They weren’t tomboys by any means, but in times like these had learned to handle weapons. As you may recall each of us had an HK416 and an HK417 and generally used the HK417. It turns out that the girls both had the same two weapons, arranged for by their fathers who were SWAT members. Each also had a Glock G-21SF and a Glock G-30SF with the exact same set of magazines, 3 extra for

the G-30SF and the remainder for the G-21SF. Their knives were Cold Steel 21" Latin machetes and Black Bear Classic VG-1 San Mai III. Close, but no cigar.

June had been slowly "selling" the boys to the girls. She'd pointed out their good points and short comings because "nobody is perfect". They were hard workers and considerate of their mother's needs suggesting that when they choose someone to spend their lives with these qualities would undoubtedly be shown to their wives.

June had somehow managed to get 1 additional mare and 2 geldings, the same age as our current horses. The other mares had foaled and produced 2 colts and 2 fillies and were with foal again. I was beginning to wonder if there was some conspiracy going on.

We had 4 yearling cattle and 4 new calves. We'd kept the gilts and sold the barrows to the meat processing plant because for some reason most of pigs this birthing had been boars and we had to get them castrated. We didn't quite have enough freezer room and could butcher pork out of the next batch of pigs (Poland China). Fortunately we had more than enough beef to last a full year and then some. But we might need to fill the boys' freezers in another year, if things worked out.

Barbara drove both of them to and from and we refilled her gas tank and paid in food and silver as was agreed. That went well through Christmas when the first snow storm of the season hit. By the time they finished the hurry-up cleanup, the road was impassable. June radioed Shelia who was in touch with Stella via CB. June suggested that the young women could stay in one of the mobile homes, in our shelter or use the boys' bedrooms and let the boys sleep in the shelter.

Shelia told June to hang on and the 4 of them would discuss it. When she came back on, she had several questions, mostly pertaining to the fact that the girls hadn't taken a change of clothing. June said she had some flannel night gowns that would fit and if Barbara and Rachel would give her their clothes, she would run them through the washer and dryer and they'd have clean clothes when they woke up.

Shelia suggested letting the girls sleep in the shelter since it could be locked from inside and boys would be boys. She didn't realize it, but it was as if she'd slapped June in the face.

"Never mind Shelia, we'll fire up one of semis and bring them back to Springfield. When the roads are clear, you can come to pick up their vehicle."

"Did I say something wrong?"

"You implied that Dave and Don weren't to be trusted."

"I didn't mean it that way. Oh well, maybe I did, I'm so sorry."

“Our sons were well raised just like your daughters. They wouldn’t pull anything that would interfere with their growing fondness of your girls.”

“You think there’s something there?”

“It looks like it and Jerry and I had a discussion with the boys a while back concerning the possibilities. That was before the subject of Barbara and Rachel came up. I don’t believe love enters into the picture yet, but they’re becoming good friends and good friendships are the foundations of good marriages.”

“My husband says yes. Hang on a minute so I can check with Stella.”

“Ok, we all agree and you can make the decisions about the sleeping matter as you see fit.”

“Thank you. You won’t regret it.”

The Dixons – Chapter 13

David and Donald hurriedly picked up their bedrooms and took a few changes of clothing down to the shelter. June gave each girl 2 of her flannel nightgowns. While they were at it, she and the girls braved the falling snow to go to the storage building where they got the girls flannel shirts, jeans, socks and new packages of underwear. The girls couldn't figure out how she just happened to have just the right sizes and 3 sets of outerwear and 6 sets of underwear.

I may not be a rocket scientist, but it was obvious that June had consulted with Stella and Shelia and gotten the sizes and picked up the clothing, just in case. And if the truth be told, I'd never seen June wearing any of those flannel nightgowns. She'd probably picked them up at the same time as the other clothing and run them through the wash with the flannel shirts and then a second time before folding them up and putting them in her dresser. The first washing was to remove any sizing and a second to make the colors appear to be very slightly faded.

There was definitely a conspiracy going on. And, June was the only active participant. A conspiracy may refer to a group of people who make an agreement to form a partnership in which each member becomes the agent or partner of every other member and engage in planning or agreeing to commit some act. It is not necessary that the conspirators be involved in all stages of planning or be aware of all details. Any voluntary agreement and some overt act by one conspirator in furtherance of the plan are the main elements necessary to prove a conspiracy. A conspiracy may exist whether legal means are used to accomplish illegal results, or illegal means used to accomplish something legal. "Even when no crime is involved, a civil action for conspiracy may be brought by the persons who were damaged.

Maybe God was one of the indirect co-conspirators because it snowed for 5 days and 4 nights. What had, at first, been a snow storm that could have been pushed through with a semi eventually became a pile of snow that required frontend loaders to move. Because the girls were able to stay in constant touch with the mothers and had explained the living conditions and the fact that June just happened to have several changes of clothing that would fit them, Shelia and Stella didn't make much of a fuss.

The husbands were working hard at getting shoveled out so they could get to frontend loaders and graders to clear the roads to retrieve their daughters. What father with an attractive teenage daughter wouldn't? As it was, we had to use the shelter escape tunnel that went to the OT and beyond that, more recently, to the barn, to tend to the horses, cattle, hogs and chickens. The livestock needed fed and the milk and eggs collected. We had so many eggs we had to shovel our way to the storage building and collect our supply of water glass to store the eggs.

We had sodium silicate on hand because we planned to try our hand at homebrewed beer and wine. Sodium silicate gel was used to clarify the two due to its flocculent properties. Flocculation, in the field of chemistry, is a process wherein colloids come out of

suspension in the form of floc or flakes by the addition of a clarifying agent. The action differs from precipitation in that, prior to flocculation, colloids are merely suspended in a liquid and not actually dissolved in a solution. In the flocculated system, there is no formation of a cake, since all the flocs are in the suspension.

I seem to remember Jerry saying something about storing eggs in one of his later stories and I found what I was looking for in *Home Sweet Bunker*. We had been turning our excess milk into cottage cheese and Colby, Jack and Mozzarella and some of the butter fat continued to be churned for butter. Bread was typically baked in 6 loaf batches of 1½ pound loaves. When June made extra dough, she'd make hot dog buns, hamburger buns, french bread and cinnamon rolls.

The hot dogs were a slim sausage made by the meat processing facility that included beef, pork and chicken ground extremely fine and stuffed into natural casings. We had a metal ring we used to form hamburger patties from the ground sirloin. It was a simple process of forming a ball of meat, setting it in the ring on top of plastic film, topping it with a small clear plastic board and giving it a thump. The plastic film on the bottom kept the patty from sticking and sliding the plastic board off sideways kept the top from sticking. We had enough rolls of plastic wrap...

That was one positive side of salvaging or scavenging, not only was the price right, but you could take all of any given product you had room to carry. The obvious choices weren't up to us, thanks to TOM and Jerry. We got the bath tissue, facial tissue (backup bath tissue), feminine hygiene supplies, coffee, tea, cocoa and shortening and oil plus all those staples that we couldn't produce, easily, ourselves.

Ultra Charmin jumbo rolls came 6 to the pack, 5 packs to the bundle and weighed next to nothing so always went on the top of the load. One could even sit on a bundle, collapsing the rolls to get the bundle into smaller areas. The same applied to the other premium bath tissue, quilted Northern ultra. We usually went for the bundle of 8 packs of double rolls and or the bundle of 6 packs of double rolls. And, not to be picky, we got the soft and strong jumbo rolls packaged 30 per. We took it all because bath tissue was better than the Sears, Penny's and Ward's catalogs that weren't printed and freely distributed anymore. Like I've said before... any port in a storm.

I was becoming a bit incautious, I mean we had the war and some cold weather after, but it didn't seem to come to the standards I expected of a Nuclear Winter. The New Madrid Seismic Zone to our east was very quiet and Yellowstone most certainly hadn't blown its top. But, I remembered TOM's friend Clarence and checked the sky each evening, just in case. While we weren't best buddies with folks in Springfield, we'd learned to tolerate each other. More importantly we'd only had those 2 situations arise, that old guy that June had ended up shooting and the bunch that said we had to give them food. We didn't kill everyone; two weren't even badly wounded. Oops.

Oh, I guess I forgot to tell you about the extension. That's probably because I hadn't been involved with it getting put in. June has this independent streak about a mile wide and sometimes she takes it upon herself to have something done. After they built the warehouse, she hired the construction of an extension of egress tunnel to the barn. That's all well and good... but she should have also had it extended to the garage, the storage building and the warehouse.

At the time, we hadn't salvaged the extra precious metals; that was the Oklahoma trip. Even so, we were sitting on a passel of gold and silver that had greatly increased in value and it would have given us advantages with additional tunnels and placed more gold and silver in circulation in Springfield. She had arranged it through Shelia and Stella, the gold dust twins.

"Goldie" and "Dusty", the original Gold Dust Twins, were often shown doing household chores together. They were mascots of Fairbank's Gold Dust Washing Powder products. Fairbank's Gold Dust washing products was a line of all-purpose cleaning agents researched and developed in the late 1880s by the Nathaniel Kellogg Fairbank Soap Manufacturing Company. The original (circa 1892) version of the twins was a standard drawing of two young African-American children cleaning up together in a washtub. On the original containers, they are simply pictured standing side-by-side behind a mound of gold coins, under an arch reading "Fairbank's" and over the "Gold Dust Washing Powder" text.

By 1900, the twins had been transformed into a cartoonish pair of caricature, bald, asexual black children shown wearing tutus emblazoned with the words "Gold" and "Dust". On product containers and in advertisements, they were often comically depicted, along with a huge stack of dishes in a washtub, with one twin cleaning, the other drying. The twins became icons following a 1903 national marketing campaign, with the slogan "Let the Twins Do Your Work". They became an easily recognizable trademark found in many, if not most, US homes during the first half of the twentieth century. Historically, the "Gold Dust Twins" nickname has been used to describe two individuals working closely together for a common goal.

I have a firm belief that when I mention something that not every one might understand, I should at least share my understanding of the same with the gold dust twins being a perfect example. Shelia and Stella were nearly inseparable. Therefore what I intended with the label was to describe two individuals working closely together for a common goal. In this case that was helping June with the greenhouse and garden. Of course June shared, too.

Come spring we're going to help the Springfield economy and get the additional tunnels put in. Since we have one American Safe Rooms Blast Hatch, we should be able to duplicate it (he said with his fingers crossed). Wait a minute, who copied the blast hatch we originally installed? I say duplicated because the hatch was still at the OT and there was one in the barn.

“June do you know who duplicated the blast hatch?”

“Sure don’t, Shelia and Stella arranged for that.”

“How do we know they don’t have a key to the lock?”

“They can’t.”

“Why not?”

“Well... I didn’t totally trust them so I had the original hatch installed at the barn and the duplicate in the base of the OT. There are only 4 keys for the original that I know of, yours, mine, Dave’s and Don’s. Just because you’re paranoid doesn’t mean they aren’t out to get you. The only access to the OT is through the tunnel.”

“Not bad... not half bad.”

Now, we had to get Barbara and Rachel back to their families. And keep the families informed about the likelihood of them reaching us. It didn’t look good from what we could see. Dave went up into the OT and radioed down that all he could see in any direction was snow and more snow. Even I-44 was blanketed in snow. June kept them busy baking bread, french bread, buns and cinnamon rolls. If she kept it up much longer we were all going to get fat.

[FACTOID: November 30, 1874 is the birthdate of the greatest statesman in history. Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Reagan deemed him so. Just his indomitable leadership in World War II rallying a beleaguered Britain to triumph over Nazi tyranny would alone earn him this unique distinction.

But the world is not aware that Churchill was a modern Nostradamus in his prophetic wisdom. Among other things, he predicted two World Wars and the Cold War. Even today’s headlines are the stuff of predictions he made close to a century ago. In 1905, he foresaw the creation of the Israeli State. Churchill was the first non-Jewish Zionist. Twelve years before the Balfour Declaration, in 1917, Churchill called for a Jewish State. It was not as if he represented New York’s Lower East Side or Miami populated by Jews.

Then in 1921, in a speech to the House of Commons, he spoke of a militant Islam sect, the Wahabis, more violent than any in history, which would kill their own sisters for wearing the wrong attire. These fierce zealots would terrorize the West with bomb-carrying Jihadists who would burn embassies and destroy buildings by their passion to sacrifice their lives for guarantee of Islam heaven. Winston Churchill II would read his grandfather’s speech to President George W. Bush in the White House in 2007. If Churchill didn’t exactly predict 9/11, he described its radical extremist perpetrators.

President Nixon once told me that Churchill was the only leader who seemed to have a crystal ball. He had “the mind of an historian and courage of a soldier.” A scholar of history, he could see patterns replicating themselves. Like a soldier, Churchill would risk political death by telling the people what they didn’t want to hear. Spineless politicians or cover-your-ass bureaucrats will never state the ugly truths. Churchill, however, didn’t worry about repercussions. He didn’t talk in euphemisms or evasions. He delivered the unvarnished facts.

The English did not want to hear, after the decimation of a whole generation in World War I, the need to arm for another war threat by the Germans in the 1930’s.

A decade later, Americans and British turned deaf ears to Churchill’s warning that their recent ally, the Soviet Union, threatened the democracies of Europe. Even the Wall Street Journal—no left-wing newspaper—denounced Churchill’s Iron Curtain Address. Eleanor Roosevelt called Churchill a “war monger.”

In that same year, 1946, Churchill told Europeans gathering in an assembly in Zurich that Germany, whose armies had only recently devastated their countries, had to be welcomed back into its community for the future prosperity of Europe. Boos accompanied his unwelcome message. The Europeans were appalled that their World War II hero would suggest such an idea.

For those who ask what relevance Churchill’s predictions have to today’s world, they should keep in mind that he predicted the Energy Crisis in 1929. He warned that the West needed new sources of fuel to escape from being beholden to the oil oligarchies of the Middle East. And then in 1957, this writer heard Churchill state that the UN was a feckless organization, maimed by a congenital deformity – the Soviet veto – and that it was increasingly dominated by one-party autocratic states. One only has to note President Calderon who stuffs ballot boxes and jails dissidents in Columbia while his country serves on the UN Human Rights Commission; or even worse, President Assad of Syria who is slaughtering thousands of his citizens while his country joins Columbia on that Human Rights Commission that is attacking the U.S. for, among other things, using capital punishment and the many African-Americans serving in prison.

On his 138th birthday, the world should not only recognize Churchill’s championship of freedom, but also study his many predictions that still endanger our liberties and freedoms. – Fox News 12/03/2012]

Now just a minute the author is mixing apples and oranges in referring to the former president of Mexico, Felipe de Jesús Calderón Hinojosa and Juan Manuel Santos Calderón. Due to Spanish naming conventions, I’ve underlined the name by which the Presidents are known. Interestingly, the US firmly approved of Santos’ 2010 election. I believe the ballot box stuffing is attributed to Calderón, not that it matters what I believe.

The two Deputies, working together, managed to plow out I-44 and then the roads from Marshfield to our acreage. After interrogating their daughters at length, both were satis-

fied that there hadn't been any hanky-panky going on during their stay. I raised the question about the girls' jobs.

"I'm not the weatherman and I don't have a HAARP system so we weren't responsible for the girls getting stuck here. June had apparently anticipated that the situation could arise and had acquired appropriate clothing for your daughters. They've been quite a help to her baking bread and what not. We'd like them to continue cleaning the singlewides and I'm prepared to follow the two of you back to Springfield and get a frontend loader to keep the road to Marshfield open."

"HAARP? What are you talking about?"

"The High Frequency Active Auroral Research Program (HAARP) is an Ionospheric research program jointly funded by the US Air Force, the US Navy, the University of Alaska, and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA). HAARP is the subject of numerous conspiracy theories, with individuals ascribing various hidden motives and capabilities to the project. Journalist Sharon Weinberger called HAARP "the Moby Dick of conspiracy theories" and said the popularity of conspiracy theories often overshadows the benefits HAARP may provide to the scientific community. Computer scientist David Naiditch has also referred to HAARP as 'a magnet for conspiracy theorists', saying the project has been blamed for triggering catastrophes such as floods, droughts, hurricanes, thunderstorms, and devastating earthquakes in Pakistan and the Philippines, major power outages, the downing of TWA Flight 800, Gulf War syndrome, and chronic fatigue syndrome.

"Specific allegations include the following:

- A Russian military journal wrote that Ionospheric testing would 'trigger a cascade of electrons that could flip earth's magnetic poles'.
- The European Parliament and the Alaska state legislature held hearings about HAARP, the former citing 'environmental concerns'.
- Author of the self-published *Angels Don't Play This HAARP*, Nick Begich has told lecture audiences that HAARP could trigger earthquakes and turn the upper atmosphere into a giant lens so that 'the sky would literally appear to burn'.
- Former Governor of Minnesota and noted conspiracy theorist Jesse Ventura questioned whether the government is using the site to manipulate the weather or to bombard people with mind-controlling radio waves. An Air Force spokeswoman said Ventura made an official request to visit the research station but was rejected – 'he and his crew showed up at HAARP anyway and were denied access'."

"Never heard of it."

"I have, Jerry wrote about it in *If You Don't Like the Weather*. Apparently the US, Russia and China all had HAARP programs and they were all switched on at the same time, causing major modifications to the weather."

“Jesse Ventura, huh? One term Governor!”

They got Barbara and Rachel around and left. Did we have another prepper in Springfield in the form of Barbara’s father? One, he knew about HAARP based on a PAW fiction story written by Jerry D Young. Two, he referred to him as Jerry and not Jerry D Young. Third, he didn’t expound on the story beyond the basis of the story. It’s a shame we don’t have challenge coins to identify fellow preppers. I presumed he didn’t belong to a Mutual Aid Group (MAG) because of his presence in Springfield rather at some bug out location, say Table Rock Lake.

So, we had one Deputy that was probably a Redneck and one that was probably a prepper. Interesting. Barbara and Rachel continued to clean the singlewides, Barbara did Dave’s and Rachel did Don’s, naturally. When spring came, they came out with Shelia and Stella and when they weren’t cleaning helped with the greenhouse and or garden and or canning. We needed the help because we expanded our garden. Boy, did we ever.

June decided that, even though she had thousands, the jars and the Tattler lids had separate deposits. One silver dime for the jar and one silver quarter for the lid and ring; and, everyone that bought a jar sealed with a Tattler lid had to buy a Tattler opener for 50¢ in silver. It’s not like they wear out, you know.

The boys and I used one of the 5 acre fields to grow hard white wheat and a second to grow oats or durum wheat, alternating from year to year. It took about a year before David came to me and asked my opinion about him asking Barbara to marry him. I told him that he was 19 and, in my not so humble opinion, was emancipated. I suspected he’d already discussed it with Barbara. I pointed out that the proper thing to do was to talk to her father and make his intentions known and be more old fashioned and ask her father before it was announced to community.

The very next day, Donald and I had nearly an identical discussion except for it being Rachel and not Barbara. Don was rather hesitant because Rachel’s father was a bit of a Redneck and had once uttered the infamous phrase, “You’re not from around here are you?” I asked if he talked to his mother and he hadn’t. I suggested that he talk to his mother and get her to talk to Stella so Stella could pave the way. Any port in a storm.

They had a double wedding today. No engagement rings, just plain gold bands. The boys had spent yesterday afternoon and evening moving all of their things to their singlewides. Barbara and Rachel had both dropped off a pair of suitcases yesterday and one of those small makeup cases. I don’t know why they were worried about clothes; it wasn’t like they’d be wearing (m)any during the honeymoon. Besides, June had those outfits she’d gotten for them back when.

The Dixons – Epilog

It's been 16 years since that double wedding. We have 5 grandchildren. Dave and Barbara had 2, a boy and a girl, David Jr. and Rachael (not spelled Rachel). Don and Rachel must have had more energy or something. There were only two births, but it produced Donald Jr. and twin girls, Barbra (not spelled Barbara) and Stephanie. In both cases the first baby came around 11 months after the marriage and the second 2 years later.

I figured out finally that Barbra wasn't named after Barbara Dixon, but Barbra Streisand, poor kid. It turns out that they intended to name Stephanie after Stefanie Powers (Hart to Hart) and Stephanie Kramer (Hunter) but as you can see neither actress spelled her name the way they spelled Stephanie.

In one sense, we were different than TOM. He had very few action scenes in his stories. For a while, I was worried we'd run out of ammo. One would have thought that if there was any marauding, it would have started sooner rather than later. It didn't. It started later, around 8 years into the PAW. The marauders had obviously cleaned out several National Guard Armories and ammo supply points.

Most of their vehicles were Hummers, standard and up-armored. Most of the vehicles had weapons mounts and the weapons ranged from M249 SAWs to M240B to M2HB to M2A2 to Mk19s. They seemed to favor the M4 carbine although only God knows why. They usually showed up in swarms like Africanized honey bees. They'd have multiple vehicles with at least one of each type of weapon and in nearly every case, a semi-tractor pulling double and sometimes a road train.

It's pretty tricky to pull a road train unless you're in the Australian Outback where you have mile after mile of open roads. The closest road to us that fit that description was I-44. But like us, they could drop one or two trailers, as needed. It only took one hit from one of the grenades from an Mk19 into the OT to make us change our game plan. After we'd defeated them, and in the process destroying the Mk19 with our Mk19, we repaired the hole and increased the plates triple and made their Mk19, if they had one, our number one priority.

Over a period of time we managed to salvage enough parts from the damaged Mk19s to build a 2nd and eventually a 3rd. On an occasion, we'd capture a 5 ton or 10 ton truck carrying grenades for the Mk19 and other ordnance. Finally got some 81mm mortars although they hadn't used them against us.

We either withstood 13 or 14 attacks over a 4 year period. I kind of lost count and don't feel like looking back in my journal to find the correct number. With our friend the Deputy who was Barbara's father and a prepper and Rachel's Redneck father we eventually became fast friends. Grandchildren will do that, sometimes. The only thing I believe that really peeves him is our getting our share of the H&K rifles destined for the Sheriff's SWAT team.

That didn't keep either family from getting their full share of one HK416 and one HK417 for each member of their families, with grenade launchers. We swapped them some military 40mm grenades for some less lethal grenades. They weren't completely non-lethal depending on where you hit the target and which less lethal round you were using.

It's the twins' birthday today and we're hosting the party. Do you know what those rascals want? Ruger Bearcats!

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